THE SACRAMENTS
A COURSE OF SEVEN SERMONS

MAC DONALD

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BY

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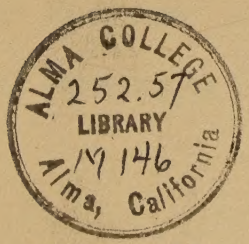

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The Sacraments.

A Course of Seven Sermons.

I.—The Sacraments in General.

"Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God."—I. Cor. iv. 1.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The Church of Christ, like Christ, her spouse, the way, the truth, and the life: pointing out the way in the commandments, teaching the truth in the creed, giving life in the Sacraments, what the Christ life is, and how nourished by the Sacraments.

I. A "Sacrament" defined and explained: (a) A "sacred sign" or symbol; (b) "sensible" and why; (c) "instituted by Jesus Christ," and made after His likeness; (d) "to sanctify and save the souls of men," this being the end of its institution; (e) the Sacraments, seven in number, to supply the seven special needs of the spiritual life.

II. Nature and efficacy of the Sacraments: (a) They signify grace, and (b) bestow it; (c) by a virtue inherent in them; (d) as instruments of the Holy Spirit. Scripture proof of this doctrine.

III. The Sacraments of the Old Law compared and contrasted with the Sacraments of the New: (a) In the manner of operating; (b) in their effect. The former but shadowy tokens, the latter life-giving agencies; by those a ransom promised, by these a ransom wrought. A parable and its application. God's power and wisdom made manifest in the use of material and sensible elements.

IV. Constitution of the Sacraments, made up of "matter" and "form." Meaning and purpose of these.

V. Division of the Sacraments into: (a) Sacraments of the living and of the dead; (b) character imprinting; (c) of necessity, of precept, of free choice.

Conclusion.—This sinful world an untowardly soil for the seed of spiritual life sown by the Sacraments. Dangers to which this life is exposed; care to be taken of it; transplanted to its natal soil it will bloom forever.

"He who hears you hears me," says Christ to the teachers of His Church; and again, "He who hears not the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." The Church, then, Christ's

spouse, and our Mother, living His life, teaching His truth, knowing His way, is to us, with whom He no longer visibly dwells, the way, the truth, and the life. His way she makes known to us in the commandments, His truth she sums up for us in the creed. His life she gives us in the Sacraments.

In the Sacraments, by means of the Sacraments, the Church makes us partakers of the life of Christ. Christ gave His life for us, that we might live by Him. "I am come," He says Himself, "that they may have life, and have it more abundantly." Not, indeed, as the soul is the life of the body, so is Christ the life of the soul; for soul and body are so joined together as to form one nature and one person. Christ is our life, in that He is the author and never-failing source of a new life in us. He is our life, in the same way that the sun is the light of the world, for the sun gives light and ever keeps sending forth his rays to chase away the darkness and illumine every corner of the universe. But as the man who is blind sees not the light of the sun, so the soul, that is spiritually blind, sees not the light of the world and is not quickened by His life-giving rays.

Christ is the life of those who are born again. He is king of a kingdom that is not of this world, and He tells us Himself that no man can enter into that kingdom if he be not born again of water and the Holy Ghost. Mark the words, "of water and the Holy Ghost." Therefore water is, by Christ's own institution, in some mysterious way, a factor in the new birth. It is by means of a "mystery," a Sacrament, or sacred symbol that we get the new life, that we are begotten in Christ. So it is by other Sacraments, or sacred symbols, of which the successors of the apostle in the Christian ministry are the dispensers, that the new life, the Christ life, is

nourished in us, and grows, and is restored if it dies, as, alas! it so often does. This is but another way of saying that the Sacraments are the means of grace and the channels of grace to the soul; for the life of Christ in us is grace, and then and only then do we live through Christ and in Christ the life of Christ when by His grace He dwells in us; that is, when we are in what is commonly called the state of grace.

By Sacraments, then, we mean certain mystic rites which Christ has established in His Church as grace-conferring ordinances. A Sacrament, as defined in our Catechisms, is a sensible sign of grace instituted by Jesus Christ to sanctify and save the souls of men. That which leads us to the knowledge of something other than itself we call a sign. It may be natural or conventional, according as the meaning of it is fixed by nature or by the agreement of men. Smoke is a natural sign of fire, water of cleansing, oil of soothing. Words, on the other hand, are conventional signs of ideas, and written words are conventional signs of spoken words. When a sign not only signifies but effects that which it signifies it is called a practical sign. The Sacraments are in part natural, in part conventional, signs; natural as to the matter, conventional as to the form. Thus, the bread of the Eucharist is a natural symbol of nourishment; the words of the form, *this is my body,* signify what kind of nourishment it is. Again, the Sacraments are practical signs of grace. They not only signify grace but produce it in the soul. And in this, as we shall see, the Sacraments of the New Law differ from those of the Old, which were mere symbols, not instruments, of grace.*

The Sacraments are "sensible" signs of grace, that is to say, such

*For a compendious statement of what grace is see Vol. III. of the HOMILETIC MONTHLY, pp. 773-777.

signs as may be perceived by the senses. The Sacraments were instituted for men, and for men there can be no sign which is not sensible. All that we know in this life comes to us through the senses; we can not get an idea of anything unless it be put before us under some sensible form. This law of our nature lies at the root of the whole Sacramental system. Man, being a creature of sense, has to be led from sensible things, through sensible things, to spiritual things. And the all-wise God has wisely adapted the means of grace to the needs of man's nature. Moreover, the Sacraments are instituted as remedies against sin, the great moral ailment of mankind. This ailment has its root mainly in the revolt of the sensuous side of man's nature against right reason. Hence the remedy, to be suited to the disease, should itself take a sensible form.

The Sacraments have been "instituted by Jesus Christ." No other than He could be the author of the Sacraments. None but He is the source of grace; none but He could make sensible things instruments of grace to the soul. And the Sacraments are like their Author. The outward or visible sign corresponds to His human nature; the inward grace corresponds to the divine nature, which was veiled from sense in Him. And as the divinity in Him operated in and through the sacred humanity, so grace in the Sacrament operates in and through the sacred symbol. Again, as the sacred humanity is made up of body and soul, so the Sacramental sign is made up of matter and form, of which the latter is to the former as the soul is to the body.

The end for which the Sacraments were instituted is indicated by the last words of our definition—"to sanctify and save the souls of men." To sanctify is to cleanse the soul from sin and make it holy, which are not two different acts, but two aspects of one and

the same divine act. The same light which illumines a room removes the darkness. The work of sanctification wrought by the Sacraments, the work of dispelling the darkness of sin and error, is a progressive work. And it affects the mystic body of Christ, which is the Church, as well as each of its individual members. Two Sacraments serve to perpetuate the life of grace in the Church as a whole, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The other five propagate this life in each one of us. Baptism begets the spiritual life, Confirmation fosters it, by the Holy Eucharist it is nourished, Penance restores it. And because, while we live in this world of sin, the life of the soul is liable to be lost, nor is any child of Adam saved unless he die in the state of grace, there is a special Sacrament, Extreme Unction, which anoints the athlete of Christ and strengthens him for the last struggle. Victor in that struggle, the soul passes from the world of symbol and shadow into the truth.

The Sacraments of the New Law, as I have said, both signify the grace which they confer, and confer the grace which they signify. Thus the water of Baptism not only signifies cleansing, but really cleanses the soul from sin. There is a virtue in it, St. Augustine says, which makes the heart clean. So the bread of the Eucharist is a fitting symbol of the spiritual nourishment which the body of Christ imparts to the soul. The Sacraments are thus effectual means of grace. They contain grace, the Council of Trent teaches, and confer it on all who receive them with due dispositions. Grace is conferred by virtue of the act done, a God-given virtue inherent in the Sacramental rite itself. But as the rite is done and over in a brief space, so the virtue that operates in it passes with it. The painter with his brush makes the ideal that is in his mind live on canvas, but the power to produce the picture is in the brush only

while it is being wielded by the painter. Similarly, the power to grave God's likeness in the soul of man is in the Sacramental element only while it is being used by the Spirit of God for that purpose.

The Sacraments confer grace not on all who receive them, but only on those who receive them with due dispositions. They are fitted, indeed, to confer grace on all, but all are not fitted to receive grace. So fire is fitted to burn all kinds of wood, but, to take fire, the wood must be dry. And the sun is fitted to flood a room with light, but the housewife has to lift the blinds that the light may enter.

That the Sacraments are no empty signs of grace is plain from the language used by Our Lord and the inspired writers in speaking of them. Man is said to be born again, "of water" as well as of the Holy Ghost. So the apostle says that we are saved by the laver; that is, the washing of regeneration. The Eucharist in like manner is, by Christ's institution, itself a means of grace to the soul. It is no mere symbol of grace, but the fountain of grace, Christ Himself. Hence "He who eats of this bread shall live forever;" and "he who eats me," says Our Lord, "shall also live by me." So, too, Our Lord gave His apostles power to forgive sins; not to signify the forgiveness of it merely, or to declare the forgiveness of it, but to forgive. So, once more, He gave His apostles power to bestow grace by the laying on of hands. And that this laying on of hands was no mere token of grace we gather from the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "Stir up the grace of God that is in thee by the laying on of my hands."

This is the great difference between the Sacraments of the New Law and those of the Old. The latter were mere symbols of grace. They had no virtue in them to confer grace. Hence St. Paul calls

them "weak and beggarly elements." The grace conferred in circumcision, for instance, was given, not by virtue of the act done, but only by virtue of the doer of the act, the minister or recipient of the rite. Grace came into the soul only because and wholly because of the faith and piety of the one who administered the rite and of those who received it. Now the Old Law was, as it were, the shadow of which the New is the substance and the reality. Hence we should expect that the Sacraments of the New Law should not only signify grace, but also effect it, else they would be of no greater efficacy than the "weak and beggarly elements" with which they are contrasted in the New Testament.

Again, for the debt of sin the merits of Christ are, as it were, the only coin which God will accept in payment. Now this coin, to carry on the metaphor, under the Old Law existed only in prospect. Under the New Law, since Christ has paid the price of our redemption, His merits exist in fact, and are applied to us through the Sacraments which He has instituted for this purpose. Let me explain this by means of a simple parable. A man is deeply in debt, and having no means of paying the debt is cast into prison. A friend comes along, goes to the creditor, and says to him: "Release that poor man, who is pining in prison, and I will pay the debt." He gives the creditor his note of hand, payable a year after date. The creditor accepts the note, and releases the debtor, who goes his way rejoicing. At the end of a year the debtor's friend pays the note in gold, and out of his goodness puts all his gold in bank, to establish a fund, that needy and deserving creditors may be furnished with means of paying their debts. The meaning of this parable is plain. God is the creditor, sinful man the debtor, and the friend of sinful man is He who calls Himself and is the Son of Man. From eternity

it was settled that He should give His blood as the price of men's ransom. The price was paid when He shed that blood on Calvary. Before then men were saved through faith in Him as the coming Redeemer. They offered to God sensible tokens of this faith, which are known as the Sacraments of the Old Law—not payment of the debt of sin, but pledges and securities of the future payment. And so the Son of God, the friend of sinful man, before He had yet become man, gave God the Father, on behalf of the men who lived under the Old Law and believed in Him, the promise of payment in full of all their debts, that in the meantime they should go free. But on our behalf, on behalf of all who have believed in Him since His coming, He gives no longer the promise of payment, but the payment itself—the pure gold of divine grace which He has bought for us with His blood. This is what He has stored up in His Church to redeem the men of all ages and of all lands, for with Him is plentiful redemption. On this store we draw through the Sacraments. For this did He institute them, that they should not only bear His divine seal upon them and symbolize His grace, but should be means of grace as well—should contain the gold of divine grace that was coined by Him and bears His image and superscription upon it. This is the currency of God's kingdom, by means of which the poor in spirit may buy their freedom from bondage.

But could not God, it may be asked, bestow His grace directly without using these sensible signs? Certainly He could. Why, then, does He not do so? He does so in certain cases, for the grace of God is not tied down to sensible rites. Yet, in the ordinary providence of God, His grace must come through the Sacraments, for these are the means He has Himself ordained for the dispensing of grace—sensible tokens suited to sensible creatures. He could

have given sight to the blind man in the Gospel by a mere word of His mouth, or a mere act of His all-powerful will. Yet he chose to mix spittle with clay and put it on his eyes, as if to teach us that He is able to use the most unlikely means to accomplish His ends. Enough for us to know that He is pleased to make use of material elements to confer spiritual graces upon men, thereby showing His infinite wisdom and almighty power.

The Sacraments consist of two elements, the matter and the form. As in man, for whom the Sacraments are instituted, there is a dual element, body and soul, so there is a corresponding dual element in the Sacraments. The matter and form together make up the sensible sign of grace, the matter signifying the effect of the Sacrament somewhat vaguely and the form signifying it distinctly. Water may be used for many purposes besides washing, but the form of words "I baptize thee," specifies the purpose to which it is put in Baptism. So, in the Eucharist, bread signifies nourishment indeed, but betokens corporal rather than spiritual nourishment. The form, "This is my body," makes it plain to us that the Eucharistic bread is food for the soul, and a very special kind of food, namely, the body of Christ.

A word on the division of the Sacraments. Baptism and Penance are known as Sacraments of the dead, because they raise men from the death of sin to newness of life. The other five are Sacraments of the living, because those who receive them must already possess the life of grace. Again, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders stamp upon the soul a spiritual character, and can be received but once; the others may be received again and again. Lastly, there are Sacraments which are necessary as means of salvation; Baptism for all, Penance for those who are in mortal sin; or necessary be-

cause of a precept which enjoins us to receive them, namely, Penance in certain cases, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Extreme Unction. Holy Orders and Matrimony are Sacraments of free choice.

The life which the Sacraments give does not thrive well in this cold world of ours. It is what gardeners would call an exotic, a plant brought in from a foreign land. We know that, in the order of nature, few plants take kindly to a strange soil, or grow near as well as they would in their own. Much more is this the case since sin has laid its blight upon the earth that was once so goodly and so fair. The natural life itself, which is much harder to kill, being native here and to the manner born, we know how evil it has fared in consequence of man's fall. It is heir to a thousand ills, which must sooner or later put an end to it. But how much worse it is with the supernatural life in the sinful world! The very air we breathe is charged with sin, which is to the life of the soul what a killing frost is to the life of the plant in springtime. How seldom, alas! does the seed of the new life find soil where it can yield fruit an hundredfold, or tenfold, or even live at all. It most often falls by the wayside, and is trodden down by the feet of the passers-by; or it falls on stony soil, and soon withers for want of moisture and nourishment; or it falls where the soil is foul with weeds, and these, growing up, choke it. The flesh with its passions, the world with its allurements, the devil with his wiles, all these are arrayed against it. It is slain on every hand, it is slain a thousand times, but by the great and exhaustless mercy of God it comes again to life, even as does the wayside flower that has been withered by the frosts and buried under the snows of winter, when the spring, with its warmth and sunshine, comes round once more. How careful we ought to be of this tender flower of the spiritual life that the good God has

planted in the soil of our hearts; how careful to shield it from the blight of sin, to nourish it with God's grace-giving Sacraments, until He comes to gather it, in His own good time, and to plant it again in the heavenly paradise. There in its natal soil, where it first saw the light, it will bloom forever.

II.—Baptism.

"Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."—John iii. 5.

SYNOPSIS.—Baptism the gate by which we enter the kingdom of God. Its institution, matter and form, effects, minister, subject and ceremonies.

I. Baptism instituted on the day of Our Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan, but not made obligatory till after the Resurrection.

II. The matter of Baptism, water. Its properties of cleansing, cooling, clearness aptly signify the effects of the Sacrament. Form of Baptism, "I baptize thee," etc., must be said while the water is being poured on. No word essential to the meaning must be omitted.

III. Effects of Baptism sevenfold: (1) to cleanse from original sin; (2) to cleanse from actual sin; (3) to free from all temporal punishment due to sin; (4) to clothe the soul in the robe of grace; (5) to make one a member of the Catholic Church; (6) to make one a child of God; (7) to make one heir of heaven.

IV. Bishop or priest the ordinary minister of Baptism; lay person, even an unbeliever, minister in case of necessity; must have intention of doing what the Church does. Reason of this.

V. Subject of Baptism any unbaptized person, infant or adult. Children of non-Catholic parents not lawfully baptized without the consent of parents. Proof that Baptism may and should be given to infants.

VI. Baptism necessary to salvation, in one or other of its three forms, namely, in water, in blood, or in desire. The words "unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the kingdom of God," considered and explained.

VII. Ceremonies of baptism not to be made light of; significance of them in detail.

Conclusion.—Let us call to mind in this holy season the vows we took in Baptism, and resolve henceforward faithfully to fulfill them.

Baptism is the first of the Sacraments, the gate, as it were, by which we gain entrance into the kingdom of God. The Catechism

of the Council of Trent briefly defines it as the Sacrament of rebirth by water in the word, and the definition is plainly founded on the words of Our Lord that are cited above. The Sacrament of Baptism cleanses us from original sin, and from actual sin, if such there be, makes us Christians, members of God's visible Church on earth, children of God and heirs of heaven. We are to consider the institution of Baptism, the matter and the form, the effect, the minister, the subject and the ceremonies that hedge it round.

Our blessed Lord is of Baptism, as of each of the other Sacraments, alone the author. Sacraments convey grace, and Our Lord, as God, is the fountain source of all grace, and as man alone bought with His blood a title to saving grace. Therefore none but He can, in his own right, confer grace, whether with or without the sensible signs which we call Sacraments. He instituted Baptism, so the Fathers tell us, on the day that He was Himself baptized by John in the Jordan. He then bestowed upon water a Sacramental efficacy: the cleansing from sin. But it was not till He had risen from the dead, when He charged His apostles to teach all nations, that He laid upon all the obligation of being baptized.

The matter of Baptism is water, whether it be fresh or salt, from river or lake, from a well or from the clouds. Our Lord says "water" simply, and Baptism in any water is therefore valid, but the Church requires that baptismal water should be blessed. There is a fitness in the choice of this element as the matter of baptism, for this Sacrament is necessary to salvation, and the matter used in conferring it should therefore be easily procurable in every quarter of the globe. Again, as the Sacraments signify the grace which they confer, water most aptly signifies the effects of Baptism. It has the property of cleansing, the property of cooling and the

property of clearness or transparency. Even so Baptism cleanses the soul from sin, cools the ardor of concupiscence, and lets the clear light of faith into the soul.

The form of a Sacrament is that part of the sensible sign which signifies the effect of the Sacrament distinctly. It always consists of words, for words surpass every other sign or symbol in the clearness and distinctness with which they signify. The form of Baptism, adapted from the words of Our Lord in the last chapter of St. Matthew, is, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The form is, as it were, the soul of the Sacrament. And just as man is not soul alone, or body alone, but soul and body united in one, so the matter alone is not the Sacrament, nor the form alone, but the matter and form united. Hence it is not enough to pour the water on without saying the words, or to say the words without pouring on the water; both must be done, as far as may be, at the same time. It is important to note this, as any one may be called upon to christen a child in case of necessity. It would not do, in such a case, first to say the words and then pour on the water, or conversely. Still less would it do, as persons have been known to do through ignorance or under excitement, to pour on the water, saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," for the simple reason that this is not the form of Baptism but the form of words used in making the sign of the cross. But suppose one were to omit a single word of the baptismal form, would the Baptism be valid? That would depend altogether on the word omitted. If one should omit the article "the," for instance, the form would still be valid. But if one were to omit "I," or "thee," or "baptize," or "Son," it would not. Any omission which substantially changes the meaning of the form renders the Sacrament null. Or,

to put it in another way, no word may be omitted which is needed to express the essential meaning of the form.

The effects of Baptism, briefly, are: (1) To cleanse the soul from original sin; (2) to cleanse the soul from actual sin, if such stain be on the soul; (3) to free from all the temporal punishment due to sin, for Baptism is a new birth, and as the newborn child in the order of nature has no past, so the newborn man in the order of grace so completely puts off the old man with all his works that the past is as if it never had been, its sins and the consequences of these sins being wholly blotted out; (4) to clothe the soul with the grace of God; (5) to make one a member of the Catholic Church; (6) to make one heir of heaven; (7) to imprint upon the soul indelibly the character of a child of God.

The minister of Baptism is the one who confers it. A bishop or priest is the ordinary minister of Baptism, but a deacon also may baptize, with the permission of bishop or priest. In case of necessity, any one may baptize, but a subdeacon or one in minor orders should do so rather than a lay person; and, in the case of lay persons themselves, other things being equal, a Catholic, rather than a Protestant, a Protestant rather than a Jew or unbeliever, a man rather than a woman, a grown person rather than a child, and any person who can be trusted to baptize validly rather than the father or mother of the child to be christened. That even an unbeliever may validly baptize we know from the fact that the Church has always recognized the validity of Baptism bestowed by one without the true faith or any faith, if he used the right matter and form with the intention of doing what the Church does. If it were by virtue of the doer of the act that Baptism gives grace, this could not be; but the Sacraments confer grace by virtue of the act done. Baptism is the door

by which we enter the Church. Now, any one, be he good or bad, believer or unbeliever, may turn the key in the lock and open the door, though none but the believer can enter. To confer Baptism validly, however, the unbeliever must have the intention, at least implicit and virtual, of doing what the Church does.

The Sacrament of Baptism does its work independently of the faith and piety of the one who administers it. He is but the instrument; God Himself is the principal agent; and God can use any kind of instrument to do His work. But there is one thing that God will not do: He will not do violence to the nature that He has made. He moves everything according to its nature. That which has no will of its own to determine its motion He moves necessarily; that which has a will of its own He moves only when and in so far as it freely moves itself in unison with Him as prime mover and first cause. Whenever, then, God uses man as His instrument in conferring Baptism, man must first, since he has a will of his own to which God can do no violence, lend himself freely to God's purpose. He must acquiesce in the act, and make His will one with God's will. There is another way of saying this same thing, and it is that the one who baptizes must intend to do what the Church does, for what the Church does is what God wills to be done. Hence, if even the Pope himself—and I make the supposition not because it is a supposable case, but merely by way of accentuating this great truth—were to pour the water on a child, while saying the words of the baptismal form, but without the intention of baptizing, i. e., of doing what the Church does in pouring the water and saying the words, there would be no Baptism, because he would not be putting the condition under which alone God could use him as His instrument in administering the Sacrament. If, on the other hand, a

pagan, without faith himself in the baptismal rite, but knowing that the Church regards it as a sacred thing and intending to bestow whatever benefit the Church believes it to bestow, pours water on an unbaptized person while saying the words of the baptismal form, the Baptism is valid, because he places the condition under which God vouchsafes to use a human being as His instrument in administering the Sacrament.

By the subject of Baptism we mean the person who is to be baptized. Of course, it is only an unbaptized person that can be the subject of Baptism, for Baptism is a spiritual birth, and one can be born but once. If there be question of one who has come to the use of reason, Baptism can not validly be conferred unless the person has faith and a desire to receive Baptism. Here, again, we see the wisdom and justice of God in His dealings with men. He does not require faith or a desire of Baptism in the infant, because the infant is incapable of having either. He does require both in the one who has come to the use of reason, because He will not let any one into His kingdom who, while capable, is not willing to believe His word and use the means of salvation that He has appointed. For the fruitful reception of Baptism, in the case of one who has come to the years of discretion, there is need, moreover, of at least the sorrow or attrition for grievous sin, if such sin there be. Otherwise the reception of the Sacrament would be informal though valid. The person would not have to be baptized over again, but would have to repent of and confess his sin, and so remove the obstacle which kept the Sacrament from producing its full effect.

If the subject of Baptism be an infant, the Sacrament is always valid, provided the proper matter and form be used with the right intention. But the Church strictly forbids the baptism of a child of

Protestant, Jewish, or heathen parents without their consent. She does this for two reasons: First, because the parents are the natural guardians of the child, and the rights which the Author of nature has given them must be respected; second, because there should be some guarantee that the child shall be brought up in the faith, and there can be no such guarantee when the parents are not of the faith. There is one and only one case in which the Church holds lawful and approves the Baptism of such a child, and that is when it is morally certain that the child can not live. To await the consent of the parents in such a case would be to expose the child to the certain risk of never entering the kingdom of God.

But there are those who do not believe in infant baptism. How, then, it may be asked, do we know that Baptism may be given to infants? First of all, we know that the Son of God came into this world to give His life for all men, for children not less than for grown people, nay, especially for the little ones, since He declares that of such is the kingdom of heaven, and sets up a little child as the pattern of that guilelessness and simplicity which should distinguish the children of God. On the other hand, He has told us, in the plainest words, that Baptism is necessary to salvation. Hence we infer that children are to be baptized. It is true there are other texts of Scripture which seem to imply that children are not to be baptized since they can not believe; and had we no other guide but Scripture the matter would be by no means free from difficulty and doubt. But we have a pure and unerring guide. Before one word of the New Testament was put in writing, our blessed Lord commissioned the apostles to teach and to baptize the nations, and promised to be with them till the end of the world, thus plainly implying that others should succeed them in this office, since they

were mortal and doomed to pass away. Now the apostles knew how to give Baptism, and to whom. So the question of infant Baptism was settled once for all by the practice of the Church before a line of the New Testament was written. Nor has it since for one day been a moot point in the Church, which traces back the succession of her pastors, in unbroken series, to the men who received their mission of teaching and baptizing the nations from the lips of Christ. We know that infants are to be baptized in the same way as we know so many other things that are either not at all, or not clearly set forth in the New Testament; as we know that the first and not the last day of the week is to be kept holy; as we know precisely what the means are that Our Lord has appointed for our salvation, and how we are to use these means; as we know how many Sacraments there are, and how and by whom and to whom they are to be administered; as we know that Baptism is valid, whether given by sprinkling, or by pouring on the water, or by dipping the whole person in water; as we know that even an unbeliever can confer valid Baptism. These things and many more things we know with certainty from the Catholic and Apostolic Church, our spiritual Mother that has begotten us by Baptism in Christ, the Church that spans all the ages and preaches the Gospel to all peoples, the Church that can never fail or falter in her divine mission of teaching and baptizing the nations, because, as it is written, the Spirit of God that is in her, and the Word that He has put in her mouth will not depart from her mouth, nor from the mouth of her seed, nor from the mouth of her seed's seed, from henceforth and forever.

Baptism is necessary to salvation. The words of Our Lord are plain: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he can not enter into the kingdom of God." These words, on the

face of them, would seem to mean that heaven is forever closed to every one who has not received the Baptism of water. Yet the Church has always taught that martyrdom supplies the place of Baptism by water, and not only martyrdom but also an act of perfect contrition, with at least an implicit desire of Baptism. But how is this to be reconciled with the plain words of Our Lord? In the first place, the meaning of these words has to be gathered not merely from the text itself and context, but from other passages of Scripture as well. Scripture can not contradict Scripture, else would God contradict Himself. Now, in another passage of Scripture, Our Lord declares that every one who loses his life for His sake shall find it; and in yet another passage, when asked by the young man what he must do to obtain eternal life, replies: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart; . . . this do and thou shalt live." Suppose, then, a person believes in Jesus Christ, and is put to death for confessing this faith before he can be baptized, those words of Our Lord ensure him salvation: "He who loses his life for my sake shall find it." Suppose, again, that one who has been instructed in the faith, and is sorry from his heart for his sins because they are displeasing to God, who is so good in Himself, dies suddenly before he can receive the Sacrament, the Church teaches that he is saved because he has fulfilled to the letter the conditions laid down by Our Lord Himself: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

There does not appear to be any good reason why we should not take "the kingdom of God," in the third chapter of St. John, to mean the visible society founded by Jesus Christ on earth, for this is the meaning the words bear in many passages of the Gospel. So understood, the words of Our Lord may be taken in their strict and

literal sense, without limitation or exception, for no one can enter the Catholic Church except by Baptism. He may have faith so as to move mountains, and an ardent love of God and his neighbors, but until the water of Baptism has been poured on him he remains without the Church, in token of which the catechumens of old were kept without the churches during the solemn part of the Mass.

The Baptism of water alone is a Sacrament, and imprints a character. The Baptism of blood has all the effects of the Sacrament, except the imprinting of the character. It cleanses from all sin, and frees from all the consequences of sin. Hence the Church has never prayed for martyrs, but always invoked their prayers.

As regards its administration, Baptism may be solemn or private. It is private when given by priest or lay person by simply pouring on the water and saying the words of the form. It is solemn when given in the church with the prayers, exorcisms, and other rites which are known as the ceremonies of Baptism. These ceremonies, though in no way necessary to the valid administration of the Sacrament, are not to be deemed of little account. They have been in use from the earliest times; they are full of mystic meaning; they serve to impress people with a deep and lively sense of the dignity of the Sacrament. Hence parents are enjoined, in case a child in danger of death has been baptized privately, if it should get well again, to bring it to the church, that the ceremonies may be supplied. The first thing is to choose a name. The name given in Baptism we call the Christian name, as distinguished from the surname or name of the family, and a Christian name it ought to be, preferably that of a saint or martyr. Parents who choose for their children worldly names, the names though they be even of the great ones of this world who yet live and die without the pale of the Church,

should ask themselves whether they are not putting the things of this world before the things of God. The Christian name should surely have about it the sweet savor of Christ.

The ceremonies that precede Baptism are designed to fit the candidate for the fruitful reception of the Sacrament. The remote preparation consists of prayers, exorcisms, the sign of the Cross, and other rites which have for their object to deliver the child or catechumen from the power of the devil. The Church believes in the existence of a personal devil, the prince of darkness, the deadly enemy of man, and knows that he has a species of dominion over those who have not been made clean in the waters of Baptism. She therefore addresses him personally in the exorcisms that precede Baptism, and bids him depart from the person who is to be baptized, and give way to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Then the priest puts salt in the mouth of the child, as a symbol of Christian wisdom and of that baptismal grace which preserves from the corruption of sin. Then follows the proximate preparation. The child is asked whether it believes in the principal mysteries of religion, and it makes answer by the mouths of its sponsors. The priest next touches the ears and nostrils with spittle, saying, after the manner of Our Lord to the dumb man, "*Be thou opened.*" Then the child renounces Satan, his works and his pomps, and is anointed with holy oil on the breast and between the shoulders, in token of its being made an athlete to fight thenceforward the enemies of Christ. After Baptism the child is anointed with the oil of chrism, because he is now a Christian, one of God's anointed, even as Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. A white robe is put on him as the symbol of innocence, and a lighted candle is placed in his hands, as having been called from darkness into God's own admirable light.

The sponsors answer for the child, and in default of the parents must see to it that the child is brought up and instructed in the faith. They contract a spiritual affinity with the child and parents of the child, which is an impediment to their marriage with the child or either of the parents. God and the Church are the spiritual parents of the newborn child, for no one can have God for Father who has not the Church for his Mother. In Baptism the priest holds the place of God and the sponsors stand for the Church. For, as St. Augustine so well says, Mother Church gives these little ones the feet of others, that they may walk to the place of Baptism; the heart of others, that they may believe unto righteousness, and the tongue of others, that they may confess their faith unto salvation.

On the day of our Baptism we were born to a new life. We took vows to serve God as our only Lord and love Him as our Father. But these vows, alas! we have broken time and time again. We have left God the fountain of living water, and have hewed out unto ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. We have turned to false gods, have set up in our hearts the idol of self-love, of pride, or lust, or worldliness, as did the Israelites of old their golden calf, and have fallen down and worshipped it. But the Lord our God, whom we have vowed in Baptism to serve, is charity itself, and charity, St. Paul tells us, is kind, is patient, is long-suffering. God is ever calling to us with a father's voice, if haply we shall hear Him, and turn from our sins, and prove ourselves faithful to our baptismal vows while yet it is day; for the night cometh when no man can labor. "Now is the acceptable time; now are the days of salvation." Let us heed the call of God our Father in this holy season. Let us forsake the service of Satan, put on the livery of Christ, and, with the great apostle, fight the good fight, that, like him, we too may win a crown of glory.

III.—Confirmation.

"Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." —Acts viii. 17.

SYNOPSIS.—By Baptism our spiritual birth, by Confirmation our growth in the spiritual life. Baptism makes us children of God, Confirmation makes us soldiers of Christ. Confirmation has for its matter the anointing with oil by the hands of a bishop; for its form, set words, as in the other Sacraments. A bishop the minister, but a priest can confirm by virtue of power from the Pope. The subject of Confirmation, any baptized person who is come to the use of reason; in the East infants are confirmed. The state of grace needful for the fruitful reception, not for the validity, of this Sacrament. Confirmation has all of the three conditions needful to constitute a Sacrament; a sensible sign, divine institution, the power of conferring grace. Its effect twofold: (1) the conferring of grace; (2) the stamping of a character on the soul. The Sacrament of spiritual growth. Growth a gradual process. The whole period of life a time of spiritual growth, even when the hair is white with age and the body bent with the weight of years. Confirmation bestows the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the germ. These are the seven steps of the ladder of Christian perfection. Fear the first step, wisdom the last. Between these lie piety, knowledge, fortitude, counsel and understanding. Analysis and explanation of these seven gifts. Confirmation the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit, ever since the day of Pentecost, in the world performing His mission as Paraclete. Dwells in a temple not made with hands. Our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost. Heinousness of sin. Let us reverence the temple of God, that He may receive us into eternal tabernacles.

By Baptism we are born into the kingdom of God. And as, in the natural order, the child must grow to manhood before he is fit to go out into the world and fight life's battle, so it is in the spiritual order. The kingdom of God on earth is the Church militant, whose members wage a spiritual warfare as soldiers under Christ, their captain. The child of God, therefore, to be an efficient member of the Church militant, must outgrow the weakness of childhood and attain to adult age—"the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). Confirmation is the Sacrament

which enables the child of God, by the grace of God's Holy Spirit, thus to grow into a strong and perfect Christian, a soldier of Jesus Christ. The name itself implies this, for to confirm is to make strong.

Like the other Sacraments of the New Law, Confirmation consists of matter and form. The matter is the anointing with holy chrism and the laying on of the hands of a bishop. The laying on of hands alone is mentioned in the New Testament, but the anointing is vouched for by the tradition of the Church. "Thus, too, in our case," says Tertullian, speaking of this Sacrament, "the unction runs (down our flesh) carnally, but profits spiritually, in the same way as the act of Baptism itself, too, is carnal, in that we are plunged in water, the effect spiritual, in that we are freed from our sins" (De Baptismo, Ch. vii). The words of the form are: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The bishop is the minister of Confirmation. A priest, however, may receive special power from the Pope to administer the Sacrament, using oil blessed by a bishop.

The subject of Confirmation is any one who has been baptized and not yet confirmed; not yet confirmed, for this Sacrament, like Baptism, imprints on the soul an indelible character, and can not therefore be given more than once. The candidate for Confirmation, according to the present discipline of the Church in the West, must have come to the use of reason and have some knowledge of Christian doctrine, more especially the principal mysteries of religion, the four great truths commonly spoken of as "the last things," and all

that concerns this Sacrament, as well as the Sacrament of Penance, which is to be received before Confirmation. In the East children are confirmed immediately after Baptism.

The one who is to be confirmed should be in the state of grace, for Confirmation is a Sacrament of the living, and it would be sacrilege to receive it in the state of mortal sin. Still the Sacrament would be valid, and would imprint a character on the soul, but would confer no grace till pardon was first obtained for the sin.

A Sacrament is a sensible sign of grace instituted by our blessed Lord to sanctify and save souls. Three things there are thus in every Sacrament: a sensible sign, divine institution, the power of conferring grace. The sensible sign in the Sacrament of Confirmation consists in the laying on of the bishop's hands with the anointing and the words of the form. But while a Sacrament is a sensible sign, not every sensible sign is a Sacrament. It must be divinely instituted, for no sensible sign can give grace unless it is divinely instituted for that purpose. Of this divine institution, in the case of Confirmation, there is proof at least implied in the Acts of the Apostles. There we read that the people of Samaria were won to Christ by the preaching of Philip and baptized. And when this became known to the apostles, Peter and John were sent thither, and they laid their hands on the newly baptized converts, who thereupon received the Holy Ghost. Plainly this rite, which consisted in the laying on of apostolic hands with prayer was a Sacrament, for it conferred grace—nay, the very author of grace, the Holy Spirit. It was not Holy Orders, which it outwardly resembled, in the laying on of hands, for orders are given to men only who are elected to the ministry, and the Christians of Samaria were not all of them called to the ministry, and there were among them women

and children as well as men. It follows that here was a Sacrament, distinct from Baptism and from Holy Orders, the special effect of which was to give the Holy Ghost. For so we read: "Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 17).

Confirmation produces a twofold effect: (1) It gives grace to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ; (2) it stamps upon the soul a character, which is like the putting on of a spiritual armor, with the livery of Our Lord and Master, to serve Him and do battle for Him and under His standard with the enemies that assail us on every side. Not that we become strong and perfect Christians all at once; not that we show from the first, or even after many years, such skill and courage in fighting the good fight as never to falter or suffer defeat. This Sacrament does not transform men all at once into saints and heroes, but it gives them grace to grow, if they will but correspond with the grace, until, as the apostle has it, they attain their full stature in Christ.

All growth is from within. You can not force it. It is a gradual, a slow process. It is so in the natural order, it is so in the spiritual order. But there is this difference between growth in the natural order and growth in the spiritual order, that the former is confined to the period between birth and adult age while the latter extends over the whole of one's lifetime. Nay, as a rule spiritual growth is sturdiest and surest when the season of lusty youth is over and the life of man "is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf." But whether it be in the morning of life or toward life's sunset that this growth takes place, it has ever its source in God's Holy Spirit, in the seven gifts which He bestows on the soul, and which exist in the soul, at least in germ, from the day of one's Confirmation. The

fulness of these gifts was in Christ our Saviour, and of this fulness we all receive. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse," says the prophet, "and a flower shall rise out of his root; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness; and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Is. xi. 1-3).

In these words of Isaias are set forth the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, the seminal principles of which are sown in the soul by the Sacrament of Confirmation. The prophet gives them in the order of their dignity, wisdom being first and fear last. We shall take them in the ascending order, beginning with holy fear.

The fear of the Lord is, so to say, the first step in the ladder by which the soul slowly mounts up the steep of Christian perfection. A good many Christians seem unable to get beyond this first step. They are content to keep themselves just within the territory of grace, and aspire to nothing higher. They linger in the valley below; they seek not to gain the distant heights. Others, again, pass most of their lives with one foot on this lowest rung of the ladder and the other on the earth. That is to say, the holy fear of God keeps urging them forward and prompting them to bring forth fruit worthy of penance, to seek the things that are above; but the force of evil habit, and the weight of their old sins, and the lust of worldly pleasures, bear them down to earth once more. These really have not the gift of holy fear at all. They received the seed of it into their souls on the day of their Confirmation, but they soon stifled and quenched it by sinful works.

Would that the whole world were filled with the fear of the Lord! All are in need of this gift: the good, that it may prompt them to

walk steadily along in the way of God's holy commandments, the wicked, that they may turn from their evil ways.

The next gift is piety, or godliness. It perfects the former gift. It takes away the sting that lurks in all fear, however holy. It changes the feeling of awe with which we look on God into one of love and confidence. Fear makes us regard God as our master and judge; piety gathers us round Him as children round a father, and bids us cry out to Him, "Our Father who art in heaven." Of this sweet gift is born the spirit of prayer, as well as reverence for all things that are holy, with meek resignation under present trials, for such as bear these patiently here. It is a priceless gift. But, alas! sin with its malign breath often blasts it just as it is putting forth its first blossoms in the virgin soil of the yet innocent heart. Hence we so often see children disappoint the promise of their early years, and grow up wayward and bold, disrespectful to parents and superiors, without reverence for God and holy things.

The third gift is knowledge. It is not enough to have the fear of displeasing God and the wish to please Him, if we know not what is pleasing to Him and what displeasing. With this knowledge the third gift supplies us. The fear of that endless misery to which sin leads makes us turn away from sin; the hope of reward and the sweetness of that peace which dwells in the heavenly home, these draw us on. Yet, powerful as these impulses are, they would avail nothing if we knew not how to shun the devious ways of sin and keep our feet in the narrow way which leads to life.

But even this gift of knowledge is not enough. Many have known the way of life who have not walked therein. Like the pagan of old, they have seen the better course and approved it, but have followed the worse. The way that leads to life is long and difficult. It is, for

the most part, a thorny path that lies through the wilderness of this world into the land of promise beyond the river of death, and we, poor, frail, fallen creatures that we are, are apt to falter and lose heart, to linger by the wayside, and to long once more for the flesh-pots of Egypt even though they be in the house of bondage. But our help is in the name of the Lord. His Holy Spirit is ever at hand to strengthen the feeble and help them over the hard places of the road. He brings the gift of fortitude. It is the fourth of His gifts. It turns weak and cowardly men into soldiers of Christ, who go forth to conquer their inveterate foes, the world, the flesh and the devil. For they feel their youth and strength renewed, as did St. Paul when he cried out, "I can do all things in Him that maketh me strong."

And yet the battle is not to the strong. Prudence, too, is needed, and Christian prudence is the gift of counsel. It goes before the gift of fortitude. It points out what is to be done, and how it is to be done, and how much is to be done at a time. Emboldened by the gift of fortitude we might be tempted to undertake things that are beyond our strength, or unsuited to our state in life. Here the gift of counsel both curbs and guides us. Thus, in a fit of fervor, a person might make a vow to avoid all sins, even venial, only to learn by sad experience that this is next to impossible. Or one might be so taken up with prayer and religious exercises as to neglect the duties of one's calling. This were piety, but ill-directed, lacking counsel.

Fear, piety and fortitude perfect the will; knowledge and counsel, the intellect, in the practical order—that is, they enable us to know what is to be done and what is to be avoided; and as regards what is to be done, when and how, and how much at a time. There is another gift to teach us what to believe, to give us an insight into

the truths of religion, to shed such light upon the deep things of God, the mysteries of our faith, as may be vouchsafed to mortals in a world where these things are seen as through a glass, darkly. It is the gift of understanding. It is of a higher order than knowledge as counsel.

> I do not ask to see the distant scene,
> One step enough for me.

So the poet prayed, seeking, for the moment, but the "kindly light" of knowledge and counsel to guide his steps "amid the encircling gloom." Yet in the voyage of life there is need, ever and anon, of stronger light, to catch at least some passing glimpse of the distant scene. To hold his course on the trackless waste of waters, the mariner must, from time to time, pause to take his bearings. He must lift his eyes to the heavenly bodies, the sun by day, the moon and stars by night. So we, in crossing the ocean of life, must raise eyes of faith to gaze upon the eternal truths, and from them seek light and guidance. Else we may not hope to win the haven of eternal rest.

Lastly, there is a seventh gift that crowns the others, the blossom and perfection of all the rest, the talisman of victory to the soldier of Christ, the last round of the ladder by which the Christian mounts to heaven. It is the gift of wisdom. It is the good and perfect gift that cometh down from the Father of lights. It enables the one into whose soul it descends to see everything as God sees it, and to set its true value on everything. The wisdom of this world makes men prize the things of this world. The wisdom that is from above makes men fix their minds and hearts on the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And the wis-

dom of this world is foolishness with God. Men of the world deem it highest wisdom to possess themselves of the good things of this world. St. Paul, who was full of the wisdom that is from above, reckoned all these things as dross, nay, to use his own strong word, even as dung, that he might win Christ. He had been thoroughly drilled in the school of the Holy Ghost. He had been taught to know the true beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the clean of heart," "Blessed are they who endure persecution for righteousness' sake." He had fathomed the meaning of the Master's words: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his own soul?" It is a question of profit and loss, where the loss of all things earthly, even of life itself, for Christ's sweet sake, is supremest gain.

Confirmation is, in an altogether special sense, the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost. Baptism confers grace to sanctify the soul, but Confirmation confers the sanctifier of the soul, the Holy Spirit. Ever since the day of Pentecost this Holy Spirit has been in the world, performing His mission as Paraclete, ruling the Church as a whole, guiding it in the way of truth, and sanctifying its members. Creatures of the senses that we are and tied down to the things of sense, we find it hard to bring home to ourselves this great truth of our faith, that we are living under the dispensation and personal guidance of the Holy Ghost. This Third Person of the blessed Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who is the Lord and giver of life, is present in the world to-day, in the world-wide Church, as really and truly as the Second Person, Jesus Christ, Son of the Virgin Mary, was present nineteen hundred years ago on the earth, and is still present on our altars in the

Adorable Sacrament. Our Lord Himself promised that when the Paraclete should come he should abide always with the Church. He is not the less really present for our being unable to see Him with our eyes and touch Him with our hands.

Our blessed Lord, when He was visibly present on earth, dwelt with Mary and Joseph in that lowly cottage at Nazareth. He still dwells, though unseen by eyes of flesh, in our churches, on our altars. But the Holy Spirit dwells not in a temple made with hands. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Yes, this poor tenement of clay, which death one day will dissolve, is the dwelling-place of God's Holy Spirit.

And now here is a thing to think of and to take to heart. As often as a Christian sins mortally he turns God's Holy Spirit out of his temple. To turn even the meanest of men out of one's own house without cause is shameful; to drive a man out of the house of which he is owner is open robbery. Judge, then, how heinous is mortal sin. He who is guilty of it drives God's Holy Spirit out of His dwelling-place. Let us not grieve the Holy Ghost; let us beware of quenching the Holy Ghost. Let us show due reverence to the temple in which He deigns to dwell, and treat in a befitting way this divine guest of our souls. So it will come to pass that, when this house of our earthly dwelling is dissolved, He will receive us into His tabernacle—a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

IV.—Penance.

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven unto them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."—John xx. 22, 23.

SYNOPSIS.—The healing of spiritual illness by the physician of the soul. A fitting theme for the Lenten season. Penance makes straight the way of the Lord; the means appointed by Christ Himself to make our peace with God. A "second plank after shipwreck" whereon to make one's way to the eternal shore. Penance a Sacrament. Proof of this. Christ gave to men the power of forgiving sins, and willed it to abide in His Church. Could Himself forgive sins in heaven, but it is not a question of what He could do, but of what He has done. The minister of this Sacrament a priest having faculties. Reason why a priest can not validly absolve without faculties. The case of a judge a parallel one. The acts of the penitent the matter of Penance. They bear the same relation to it that the pouring on of water does to Baptism. These acts three: Contrition, Confession, Satisfaction. The only fruitful sorrow the sorrow for sin. Include a purpose of sinning no more. Purpose must be firm, clear-cut, whole-hearted, practical. Sorrow for sin must be interior, universal, sovereign, supernatural. Must come from the heart, not from the lips merely; must reach out to every mortal sin that is on the conscience; must be, in reason and conscience, the greatest of all sorrows; must spring from a motive above nature. Motives of supernatural sorrow mainly three: the fear of hell, the hope of heaven, the love of God. This last the motive in perfect contrition. Closely bound up with it the thought of the sufferings sin has caused our Saviour.

After Baptism comes Confirmation, then the Holy Eucharist, then Penance, then the other Sacraments. This is the order in which the Sacraments are given in our Catechisms. It rests on the analogy between the natural life and the spiritual life. In the natural life the first thing is birth, then there is growth and there is nourishment, and there is a physician with remedies in case of illness. One is born into the spiritual life by Baptism, one grows in it through Confirmation, one is nourished in it by the Holy Eucharist, and one is healed in case of spiritual illness by the physician of the soul in the Sacrament of Penance. Were I to follow this order, I should,

now that I have done with Confirmation, deal with the Holy Eucharist; but I will treat of Penance instead. We are now some weeks advanced in the Lenten season, and the Church, as you know, enjoins upon all the faithful to confess their sins, so that they may receive worthily the Holy Eucharist before the paschal time expires. This is the reason why I take up Penance first.

"Make straight the way of the Lord." This was the burden of the Baptist's message to the men of his time. It was his special office to proclaim this, for he was the great preacher of Penance, the angel sent before the face of the Lord to prepare the way for Him and make straight His paths. It is a call to the consciences of men, a call to adjust matters, to right what is wrong, to straighten what is crooked, before the coming of the Lord. The ways of sin are crooked and devious, for the sinner wanders from the path of rectitude, the path of straight dealing, the narrow path of which Our Lord speaks, the path that leads to life. Hence to make straight the way of the Lord is to forsake the byways of sin and come back to the path of God's holy commandments.

Now we have one means, a means appointed by Christ Himself, to make straight the way of the Lord, to straighten out the affairs of the soul, and that is the Sacrament of Penance. And it seems fitting, as I have said, that we should turn our thoughts to this divine ordinance in this holy season, when we are preparing to celebrate the great mystery of our redemption in the blood that "blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us." For how shall we worthily celebrate that great event if we are not at peace with God? And how shall we make our peace with God save by the means that He has appointed, the Sacramental confession of our sins?

The Fathers of the Church speak of this Sacrament as a second plank after shipwreck, and the figure is an apt one. To one who has made shipwreck of baptismal innocence there is offered this plank to save him from drowning. When a vessel escapes shipwreck, the passengers reach land without any exertion on their part. They are borne thither. It is otherwise if the vessel should strike a reef and founder. Each passenger has then to shift for himself: the cry is save himself who can. How eagerly the drowning man clutches at a plank or piece of wreckage! How closely he clings to it till he drifts ashore or is rescued by a boat! Even so, Baptism frees us in childhood from sin without any act of ours. The water is poured on, the form of words is gone through with, and, lo! the child begotten in sin is born again of water and the Holy Ghost into the kingdom of God. But not so easily are we freed from grievous sin committed after Baptism. We must seize upon the plank of Penance which God in His mercy throws to us, and never let go our hold upon it until we gain a footing somewhere within the territory of divine grace.

Penance is a Sacrament which, by the absolution of the priest, remits the sins committed after Baptism to those who are sorry for them, confess them, and are ready to make amends for them by doing whatever the confessor enjoins. That it is a Sacrament is shown by the fact of its being a sensible sign instituted by Jesus Christ to give grace. The words of the priest who absolves, together with the acts of the penitent, are the sensible sign. The grace-conferring power of this sensible sign is shown by the words of Our Lord to the apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them." The same words show that it is of divine institution, for it was our divine Lord who used them, and the purport

of the words is plain. We Catholics indeed need ask no further assurance that Penance is a Sacrament than that which we have from the lips of the Church, which has been the witness for God in the world since the day of Pentecost, and which is set before us in Holy Writ as "the pillar and ground of the truth." But it is a satisfaction to find so clear a warrant for our belief in the Scripture itself. There we read how the Son of God, in solemn fashion, conferred upon His disciples power to forgive and to retain sins. His words are so plain that there is no missing their meaning. To say that He did not intend to convey the power of forgiving sins is to say that He trifled with His hearers. Which shall we believe, Christ Our Lord or men who confessedly have no way of knowing what He meant but from His own words, and yet who, in the teeth of His own declaration, that He grants the power of forgiving sins, boldly deny that He has done so? Nor can we at all doubt that He meant the power of forgiving sins to abide in His Church, for He had come into the world to save, through the forgiveness of sin, not the men of His own time only, but the men of all times. Moreover, He had already committed Himself to the Sacramental system when He instituted Baptism. Baptism is the remedy He gave against original sin; we should therefore expect Him to give a like remedy against actual sin.

Of course the Son of God could Himself forgive sins in heaven, without the mediation of men. But so could He have freed men from their sins without dying on the Cross for them, and even without at all coming down from heaven. So could He have dispensed altogether with preachers, and Himself made known to each the truths of the Gospel by special revelation. So could He have directly blotted out the guilt of original sin without instituting the Sacrament

of Baptism. So could He have healed the bodily ailments of the men of His time without giving His disciples the power of doing so. So could He have raised Lazarus from the dead without going up to Bethany to the home of Martha and Mary. But He did come down from heaven and die upon a cross. He did send out His disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature. He did institute Baptism to wash away the guilt of original sin. He did give His disciples a miraculous gift of healing bodily ailments. He did go up to Bethany to raise His friend Lazarus from the dead. There is question not of what He could have done, but of what He did; not of what might have been, but of what was and is. And so He gave power to men to forgive sins. The grant of the power is there in His own words, which, though heaven and earth should melt into nothingness, shall not pass away.

The minister of the Sacrament of Penance is a duly ordained priest, having, from his bishop, the faculty of hearing confessions. Only a priest can validly absolve: no lay person can do so, no person in minor orders, no subdeacon, no deacon. What is more, not even every priest can validly absolve, except in one instance, and that is a case of necessity. When there is a person in danger of death and no priest with faculties is to be found, any priest at all, even though he should be suspended, even an apostate, can give valid absolution. In every other case a priest must receive what are known as faculties from a bishop.

It may be said: Does not every priest receive the power of forgiving sins on the day of his ordination? He does. But it is one thing to receive power and be fit to exercise it, another to exercise it validly. To hear confessions is to sit in judgment on the penitent, to exercise jurisdiction over him. It is not for nothing that this

Sacrament is spoken of as the tribunal of Penance. The priest sits there to try those who present themselves, and to loose or bind at his discretion. Now it is not enough to be a judge that one may try cases and give decisions which shall be valid in law. A judge must have jurisdiction, that is to say, faculty from the executive of the country in which he is to hold his court. Were a judge from England to go to Washington, for instance, and presume to hold a court there, he would be guilty of a misdemeanor, and every single case would have to be tried over again. He could not give a valid decision. So with the priest. He must have jurisdiction from the executive of the Church, from some one of those whom, as the apostle has it, the Holy Ghost has set to rule the Church of God.

Penance, like the other Sacraments, has two essential elements, the matter and the form. The form consists of the words of the priest, "I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The matter is, not the sins of the penitent, which are rather the matter to be done away with, and could not, in the nature of things, become part of a sacred rite, but the acts by which the penitent turns away from and seeks to be rid of his sin. In the other Sacraments he who administers the Sacrament furnishes the matter, water in Baptism, bread and wine in the Eucharist, oil of the sick in Extreme Unction. In the case of Penance, on the other hand, the one who receives the Sacrament must supply the matter. And as there can be no Baptism without water, and no Eucharist without bread and wine, so there can be no Sacrament of Penance without the acts of the penitent. These bear precisely the same relation to the Sacrament of Penance that the pouring on of water does to Baptism. The priest may say the words of absolution over the penitent, but if the sorrow for sin is

not there, or if any grievous sin is knowingly and wilfully concealed, or if there is wanting the will to perform the penance enjoined, then the sentence of absolution is not ratified in the higher court, and the words of the priest have no more effect than would the words of one who should think to confer Baptism without water by merely repeating the words of the form. These are the three acts of the penitent which constitute the matter of the Sacrament of Penance: contrition, confession and satisfaction. I will deal with each in turn.

If we cast a glance back over our past we shall find many things done by us that we could now wish undone; many things that we have cause to be sorry for. And yet there is but one thing that ought to bring us sorrow, one thing that it is our duty to be sorry for, and that is sin. And there is another consideration. All other sorrow is barren; it serves no good purpose. The grief that men feel for temporal losses, keen though it may be, will not repair these losses; the tears we shed for loved ones over whom the grave has closed can never bring them back to us again. But the sorrow for sin is a fruitful sorrow; it is profitable alike for the life that now is and for that which is to be; for that which now is, for this sorrow is the beginning of a change for the better, a putting off of the old man and a putting on of the new; for the life that is to be, because without this sorrow our sins remain the great and only bar to our happiness hereafter.

Contrition is a sincere sorrow for having offended God by sin, with a firm purpose of sinning no more. The word is from the Latin and means literally the breaking to pieces of anything that is solid or hard. The sinner is said in Scripture to become hard of heart. Sin makes the heart hard, and sorrow softens it. A great

sorrow is said to break one's heart, and sorrow for sin ought to be the greatest of all sorrows. With this sorrow for sin there must be a firm purpose of sinning no more. It is not possible that there should be real sorrow without this purpose of amendment. And the purpose must be a firm one; no feeble, half-hearted, vague, ill-defined wish to avoid sin, but a strong, clear-cut, whole-hearted resolve to have done with sin once for all, to burst the fetters forged by evil habits, to shun the persons, the places, the things that have proved in the past to be occasions of sin, and to use all the means necessary to lead a new life; to pray more earnestly, to examine one's conscience night after night, to ponder the last things and bring them home to oneself, and especially to go more frequently to Confession and Holy Communion. It is not a bit of use in the world to form a sort of general resolution, very comprehensive but very vague, of sinning no more. We must get down to the concrete and the particulars. We must make up our minds to avoid not sin in general, but that particular sin into which we know from experience we are prone to fall, and to avoid the occasions of that sin, and to make use of the means that are needful to keep from falling again into that sin. So much for the purpose of sinning no more.

The sorrow for sin must be interior, universal, sovereign and supernatural. It must be interior; that is, a sorrow of the heart, not a sorrow put into the words or looks or demeanor or posture of the penitent, not a sorrow put on or feigned, but a heartfelt sorrow. "Rend your hearts, not your garments," says the Holy Ghost. Interior sorrow means, then, a sorrow that comes from the heart. And this sorrow must be universal; that is to say, not confined to one sin of which a person may be guilty to the exclusion of another

or others, but extending at least to all grievous sins. Every mortal sin takes away the life of the soul, and therefore we must be sorry for every mortal sin, else the life of the soul can not be restored. "It is impious," says the Holy Ghost, "to hope for half a pardon," to fancy that one may be friend and foe of God at the same time. Divine grace and mortal sins are opposed, as light and darkness. Therefore God's grace can no more coexist in the soul with mortal sin than light can coexist with darkness, day with night.

In the next place, the sorrow for sin must be sovereign. This means that the sorrow for sin should be greater than the sorrow for any other evil that can befall one. The reason is plain. The greatness of our loss, the greatness of the evil that weighs upon us, must be the measure of our sorrow, and sin is the greatest of all evils, since it is the source of every other evil, and causes infinite loss, the loss of infinite goodness and infinite happiness. By this I do not mean that we should feel the loss caused by sin more keenly or grieve for it more bitterly than for any other loss. The sorrow for sin may be really sovereign or supreme even when it is not felt so keenly as some other sorrows. A mother who sheds scalding tears over the grave of a dearly loved child has perhaps never a tear to shed for her sins. Yet her sorrow for her sins may well be, after all, the greater sorrow. It is not a matter of feeling so much as of conscience and reason. We can not command our feelings at will. If we really in our hearts set down sin as the greatest of all evils, and hate it as such, and are ready, if need be, to suffer any loss rather than forfeit God's grace and friendship by mortal sin, then is our sorrow sovereign.

Lastly, our sorrow must be supernatural. This means that sorrow for sin must spring, not from any natural source or motive, how-

ever good in itself, but from a motive and source wholly above nature. It is to the motive or cause of the sorrow we must look if we would know whether the sorrow is natural or supernatural. If one is sorry because one's sin has got one into trouble, or is sure to get one into trouble in this world; because it will hurt one's health, or hurry one into prison, or blight one's prospects in life, or bring disgrace upon one, one's sorrow is purely natural and avails not in the least unto the forgiveness of sin. But if one is sorry because one's sin is going to get one into trouble in the next world, then one is in a fair way of winning the forgiveness of sin, because the sorrow comes from a supernatural source.

What, then, are the motives of supernatural sorrow? They are mainly these three: the fear of hell, the hope of heaven, the love of God. The fear of hell comes first. Those who have fallen into grievous sin must begin with this. The fear of the Lord, we are told, is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of being cast forever into that place of torment which our blessed Lord sets so vividly before us and so often warns us about; the place prepared for the devil and his angels, an outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, an unquenchable fire where the worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished; this fear, I say, comes home to the run of men more sensibly than any other motive. And the run of men need such a powerful motive as this to stir their hard hearts to sorrow and deter them from sin. It is safe to say that the great bulk of those who are in heaven to-day would never have entered there but for the fear of hell. It was this especially which gave them pause in their career of sin, or stayed them when about to fall into sin. And if more went down to hell in imagination fewer would go there in reality.

The next motive is the hope of heaven. By mortal sin man forfeits his right to heaven, and heaven is happiness beyond the thoughts and dreams of men. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, what God has prepared there for those who love Him. The whole being of man is athirst for happiness. There is no man born of woman but is all his life long in quest of happiness. One man places his happiness in one thing, another in another, but there is no happiness for man unless he place his happiness higher than the creature. "For thyself thou hast made us, O Lord," cried St. Augustine, after having vainly sought for happiness in created things, "and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee." All that there is of truth and goodness and beauty in the world, what is it but a faint shadow of that truth and goodness and beauty which is the essence of God? Earthly happiness, at the best, is fleeting and empty; the happiness of heaven alone is real and soul-satisfying and everlasting. Mortal sin robs us of our title to this happiness, and the hope of winning it back by repentance is a true motive of supernatural sorrow.

But there is a higher motive. It is good to be sorry for sin, because sin offends God, who can make both body and soul to perish in hell; it is better to be sorry for sin, because sin offends God, who has been so good to us and who is to be sought after as our last end; it is best to be sorry for sin, because sin offends God, who is infinitely good and amiable in Himself. This is the motive of that perfect sorrow which wins the pardon of sin even before it is confessed to the priest. Such, too, is the sorrow awakened by the thought of what sin cost our divine Lord and Saviour. In His sufferings we have an unfailing motive of perfect contrition for our sins. It was sin, mine and yours, that, in the person of cruel Herod, sought the sweet babe of Bethlehem to put Him to death. It was

sin, mine and yours, that drove Him from the shelter of the humble home at Nazareth and tore Him from the arms of His loving Mother, to dwell alone with wild beasts in the wilderness. There the foxes had holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man had not whereon to lay His head. It was sin that forced the blood through every pore of His body in the garden, sin that scourged Him naked at a post, sin that thrust down upon His head a crown of thorns, sin that spat into the face on which the angels longed to gaze. What was it that marred with wounds those blessed feet that went about doing good, and pierced with nails those hands that were never raised but in benediction? It was sin, the same that at last slew the Son of God and Saviour of men. What a frightful thing is sin! What motive have we to sorrow for it, what cause to shun it, and to choose rather death itself than embrace such a monster!

V.—Penance.

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity."—I. John i. 9.

SYNOPSIS.—Perfect and imperfect sorrow for sin. Difficulty of conceiving a sorrow springing from so unselfish a motive as the love of God for His own sake. In the tribunal of penance God meets man more than half way. The duty of telling one's sins to a priest implied in the power of forgiving and retaining sins left with the Church. The Old Law a "shadow of things to come." Priests under the old dispensation to judge of the leprosy of the body; priests under the new to judge of the leprosy of the soul. Those only declared a person free from leprosy; these set him free. The leper cleansed by Christ (Mark i.). Knew he was made clean, yet is bidden to show himself to the priest. This is done in confession. The confession must be (1) simple, that is, plain and to the point; (2) humble, seeing it is of its very nature an act of humility; (3) sincere, that is, frank and honest, without attempt to conceal or cloak sin; (4) entire, i. e., embracing at least all mortal sins on the conscience, the kind and the number. How to prepare for one's confession and make it. The third and last act of the penitent, satisfaction. An essential part of the matter of penance consists in the readiness to do what the confessor enjoins. Within what time and how to be performed. Meaning of satisfaction. God being just as well as merciful exacts satisfaction for sin forgiven as to its guilt. Scriptural instances in proof. Christians, servants of God and soldiers of Christ, by sin betray their Master and desert His standard. Reparation called for. Lesson to be learned from the conduct of Naaman the leper. God grants forgiveness upon easy terms. Should we not avail ourselves of His indulgence?

The second act of the penitent, which forms part of the matter of the Sacrament of Penance, is confession. Perfect contrition, the sorrow for sin that springs from the love of God above all things for His own sake, would of itself wipe out sin without sacramental confession. But, humanly speaking at least, there are few capable of such unselfish sorrow. So complete a change of heart is hardly to be looked for as shall transform, in an instant, a sinner into a great lover of God. I am far from saying that this can not be; with God all things are possible. Nor do I deny that there are cases without number in which one bound by the chains of sin sees as in a flash

the foulness of sin and the goodness of God, and sorrows with a perfect sorrow, like the Magdalen. What I say is that such signal graces as these are exceptional. As a rule, the grace of God works slowly in the heart of the sinner, leading him step by step from the imperfect sorrow of attrition to the perfect sorrow that is born of unselfish love. This is what ordinarily happens, and we have but to recall our own experience to be assured that it is. God knows full well how hard it is for man, living in the midst of sin, his sense of the unseen world blunted by sin, keenly alive to the things of this life, but blind for the most part to the things of the next,—selfish by nature and by long years of self-indulgence—God knows, I say, how hard it is for such a one to conceive a sorrow for sin springing from so unselfish a motive as the love of God for his own sake. Therefore God meets man more than half-way. He says to man, "I will be content with an imperfect sorrow. I will give you a means of procuring pardon for your sins with such imperfect sorrow as you may easily conceive, if only you will make up your mind to sin no more." This means is sacramental confession.

The duty of telling one's sins to a priest, for the purpose of obtaining the pardon of them, is clearly implied in the power of forgiving and retaining sins which Our Lord has left with His Church. The apostles and those who received from them this power were made judges of the consciences of men. Plain it is, however, that they could not pass judgment without knowing the state of each man's conscience, and this they could know, apart from a miracle, only from the man's own confession.

We read in the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark how, when Our Lord had cleansed the leper, He bade him go and show himself to the priest. The incident has a deeper meaning than would at first sight appear. God will have all things done in

the order and manner laid down in His law. By the divine law, under the Jewish dispensation, the priests were to judge of leprosy; to declare the leper clean, in case of a cure, before he could be allowed to frequent the society of men. Now, the things of the Old Law were "a shadow of things to come" (Col. ii. 17). And so, by the divine law, under the dispensation of the Gospel, priests are to judge of sin, which is the leprosy of the soul. And they must declare the sinner free from sin before he can take his place at that divine banquet which is therefore called Communion, because it is at once the pledge and bond of man's union with God and of his fellowship with the children of light.

I have said that the Old Law was the shadow of which the New is the substance. And it was true to its character of shadow in all things. The Jewish priest could only declare a person free from leprosy; he could not cleanse him. The Christian priest, on the other hand, has power to free the sinner from his sin. There is nothing plainer in the whole of God's revelation than the grant of this power to forgive sins and to retain them. And yet there are those who tell us that God alone can forgive sin, as though He had not Himself declared by the mouth of His Only Son that He gave men also this power, which is His alone indeed by virtue of His being God, but His to commit to whom He wills. The power once given never has been recalled. Those who first received it, being mortal, have gone the way of all flesh. But the body corporate of which they were the officers still lives. The Church of the living God dies not. She is to show forth the death of the Lord till He come—the death which took away the handwriting of the decree that was against us. She is God's own physician to men, and souls covered with the leprosy of sin still crave her healing touch.

To those, then, whom Christ has clothed with this power we

must go if we would be freed from the guilt of sin committed after Baptism. The man who says, "To my God I confess my sins, to no man will I confess them," ignores the ordinance of God. At the peril of his own soul does he say this. What is more, even if he could be sure that he had made an act of perfect sorrow, he would still be bound to confess his sins. That leper was certain he had been healed, far more certain than any one can be that he has made an act of perfect contrition, yet was he bidden to show himself to the priest. Christ came, as He tells us Himself, not to make void the law, but to fulfill it. And as by the law of God, under the old dispensation, priests were to judge of leprosy, so by the law of God under the new dispensation, priests are to judge of sin in the tribunal of penance. It is galling to the pride of man, this confession of sin, but it is necessary. And, like bitter medicine to the man that is sick, it is wholesome. But to be wholesome it must be a good confession, and a good confession is not done in a careless way. As with any other work, so with confession, we must take pains with it if it is to be well done. We must see to it that our confession be simple, humble, sincere, and entire. These are the qualities that mark a good confession.

In the first place, the confession should be simple, that is, plain and to the point. One should bear in mind that the only purpose for which one kneels there in the Tribunal of Penance is to tell one's sins; not the good things one may have done, but the bad things; not the bad things some one else has done, but that oneself has done. We are there not to tell a long story by way of preface to the telling of our sins, but to go at once to the heart of the matter; not to try to excuse ourselves, but to accuse ourselves as plainly and briefly as we know how. All this is meant when we say the confession should be simple.

Another quality of a good confession is humility. The whole purpose for which one kneels in the confessional, the very posture itself, implies this. We do not go into that tribunal to boast of our sins, but with shame rather to confess them. " An humble and contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise," says the Psalmist. The heart that is contrite is humble, too.

The third quality is sincerity. This means that the confession should be frank, honest, straightforward. If ever there is need of candor and truth, "honor bright" as people call it, it is in confessing one's sins. The wounds of the soul must be laid bare to the soul's physician, if he is to heal them. We should tell our sins just as they are on the conscience, not trying to gloss them over or make them look less ugly than they are. To tell our sins frankly yet modestly should be our aim.

Lastly, the confession must be entire. We have to confess all our grievous sins, and the number of times we have been guilty of them, and the circumstances that change the species. To withhold wilfully or conceal in confession a grievous sin, or a sin believed to be grievous, would make the confession null, and add to one's sins the crime of sacrilege, not only against the Sacrament of Penance itself, but, what is still more horrible, commonly also against the Holy Eucharist. The number of times, too, must be confessed; if not the exact number, as nearly as may be; also, the circumstances that would make of what is in itself but one sin, two, or perhaps three sins. Thus, to steal is one sin, but to steal a consecrated chalice would be a sin of sacrilege as well as of theft, and to steal it from a church would be another sin of sacrilege, a different kind of sacrilege, that is: The circumstance of the chalice being consecrated changes the nature of the sin, or rather adds a new specific deformity to the act, and the circumstance that the chalice is stolen from a

place consecrated to God, yet another. In the one act there are really three sins, and it would not therefore be enough to confess that one had stolen an article of such or such value.

It may not be amiss to say a few words now on the preparation for Confession, and the way to make one's Confession. The first thing one should do is to pray God very earnestly for light to see one's sins and grace to be sorry for them. Then comes the examination of conscience, which is an earnest effort to recall the sins one has fallen into since one's last good Confession, the number of times, and the circumstances, if any, which change the species of the sin. Those who go but seldom to Confession should examine their conscience carefully on the commandments of God and of His Church, and the seven deadly sins. Those who go often may examine themselves briefly on thoughts, desires, words, deeds, or omissions contrary to the law of God. It is not needful, nor is it advisable for them to spend much time in examining their conscience. It is better, in the case of venial sins and imperfections, to single out the worst, the one into which a person is most prone to fall, and to spend one's time rather in exciting oneself to sorrow for sin, and in thinking over the steps to be taken in order to avoid sin for the time to come. The penitent may say the Confiteor before going in to confession, in fact ought to say it when, as is often the case, there are a number of others waiting their turn. On entering and kneeling, one should say: "Father, bless me, for I have sinned;" or, if the Confiteor has been already said, "I confess to Almighty God and to you, father, that I have sinned." Then follows the confession, at the end of which it is proper to say: "For these and the other sins that I can not now call to mind I ask pardon of God, absolution and penance of you, my father." One more point I would call attention to. If there are but trifling sins or imperfections to tell, one should

accuse oneself of some sin of one's past life, thus: I wish to accuse myself also of such or such a sin of my past life, or in a general way, sins of anger, or disobedience, or pride, formerly confessed. There is a twofold reason for this; (1) that if one has but trivial sins to confess it is hard to be sure that one has real sorrow for them; (2) it is often a question with the priest, in such a case, whether the penitent has furnished sufficient matter for absolution. A sin already confessed and forgiven is yet sufficient matter for absolution, because it is not the sin itself, but the acts of the penitent that are the matter of the Sacrament, and it is easily seen that one may be sorry again for a sin already confessed, may also confess it again, and be ready to do penance for it if need be.

The third and last act of the penitent, which forms part of the matter of the Sacrament, is satisfaction. This commonly goes by the name of penance, as when we speak of saying or performing penance enjoined by the priest. As an essential part of the matter of the Sacrament it consists rather in the will to do what the priest enjoins than in the actual doing of it. One must have at least the will to perform the penance, else the Confession is void. If one has the will to perform the penance, and fails to perform it, the Confession is valid, but if one has failed through one's own fault one commits a new sin, mortal or venial according as the penance was grave or light. One round of the beads would be considered grave matter, or the Our Father and Hail Mary five times for five days. The penance is to be performed within a given time, when the time is specified; otherwise, within a reasonable time. The sooner it is done after Confession the better, for if one should fall into grievous sin before finishing the penance, the remainder would be a barren work. It would count as Sacramental Penance before the Church, but it would have no merit before God, and it is more than doubtful

whether God would accept it as satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to sin.

The word satisfaction means in law the settlement of a claim due, or the payment of a debt. It is in this legal sense I use the word here. The Church teaches that, after the guilt of sin is forgiven, there ordinarily remains a debt of temporal punishment to be paid either in this life or in purgatory. This doctrine is founded in Scripture, and is in accord with right reason. God is just, and justice requires that reparation should be made for every wrong; God is wise, and in His wisdom sees that to grant a free pardon for every offense would but encourage the offender to offend the more. He could have forgiven the sins of mankind by an act of pure mercy, but being just as well as merciful He willed that His own Son should offer satisfaction and pay the penalty of our sins upon the Cross. Adam and Eve He pardoned, but they did penance their life long, he earning his bread in the sweat of his face, tilling the untoward earth which yielded him thorns and thistles in return for his toil, she bringing forth children in an agony of pain and bearing with her companion in guilt the burden of hard labor. Moses fell into what would seem to be no more than a venial sin of diffidence when he smote the rock twice. He was forgiven, but died in sight of the promised land without being suffered to set foot in it. David sinned grievously. He was pardoned, but God told him by the mouth of His prophet that the child which he begot in sin should die. Again he sinned through vanity, in taking a census of his people, and again was pardoned, but in punishment of his sin had to take his choice of three great evils, war, pestilence, or famine. And when the Son of God came in the flesh, there went before Him the voice of one crying in the wilderness, preaching the Baptism of Penance, bidding a sinful generation do penance for that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

If a soldier deserts his post in time of war, he is guilty of a grave breach of duty; if he goes over to the enemy, he is guilty of treason. We who by Baptism are sons of God and by Confirmation soldiers of Christ, are sworn to serve the Lord all our life long, and to fight His battles. But as often as we sin grievously, we not only desert the service of our Master but go over to the enemy—range ourselves under the banner of Satan, the sworn enemy of God. In every act of sin there is a turning away from God and a turning toward some creature in His stead. By every act of sin man insults God, and robs Him of the love, the worship, the loyal service that are so justly His due. In the Sacrament of Penance God forgives the insult, but requires man to make restitution for that whereof He has been robbed. It is for this that the priest enjoins a penance, not indeed equal to the offense, but very effective in wiping out the debt of temporal punishment. Even a little penance, enhanced by the grace of the Sacrament, goes a long way toward satisfying the justice of God. It may serve to exempt one from long years of confinement in that prison-house whence no man goes forth till he has paid the last farthing.

The tribunal of Penance is popularly known as the confessional, and properly so. It is in the confessional that the sorrow for sin, as well as the readiness to do penance, is sensibly shown. It is in the confession alone that we have the sensible token which is the proper matter of the sensible sign or Sacrament. Hence St. John, in the words of our text, mentions only confession of sin as the condition of forgiveness. He does not say that we are to confess our sins to a priest. He simply urges the duty of confessing our sins, leaving us to find out from the Church, which the Master commanded us to hear, how we are to confess, and to whom.

We read in the Fourth Book of Kings that Naaman, captain of

the Syrian host, came to Eliseus the prophet to be healed of his leprosy. The prophet bade him go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan if he would be made clean. Naaman, who thought Eliseus would but wave his hand over the leprous sore, and so cleanse him, waxed exceeding wroth, and went his way, exclaiming: "Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" But his servants said to him: "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" Naaman heeded the wise counsel, went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and lo! his flesh became as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. Now, leprosy is an emblem of sin, and Naaman was a type of the sinner who seeks to be cleansed from his sin. One might say, after the manner of Naaman, Why should I go to the priest? Can not God immediately forgive my sins? Yes, but as of old the prophet sent Naaman to the Jordan, so the Church, foreshadowed by the prophet, directs men to the Sacrament of Penance, which is the fountain open to the house of David and the dwellers in Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner. "Let no man," are the warning words of St. Augustine, "Let no man say I do penance secretly before God. Without cause, then, has it been said, Whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. Without cause have the keys been given to the Church. The Gospel of Christ is made void; void are the words of Christ." And upon what easy terms are we offered forgiveness! "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst not thou have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee: Wash and be clean?" O, words of wisest counsel! If God required of us as the price of freedom from our sins that we

should sell all we have and give to the poor; or that we should take up the pilgrim's staff and, having crossed the sea, should go on foot to the springs of the Jordan; or that we should do anything most hard, ought not we to do it? How much rather, then, when He has made the way so easy for us, offering a free pardon to all who come to sue for it—how much rather ought not we to go, with our humble and contrite heart, to that tribunal where the Precious Blood of Christ cleanses the conscience from dead works; where, at the words of priestly absolution, our sins are rolled away forever, and we regain the peace of God that passeth all understanding?

VI.—The Holy Eucharist.

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take ye and eat; this is my body. And he took the chalice, and when He had given thanks, gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins."—Matt. xxvi. 26-28.

SYNOPSIS.—I. The Holy Eucharist contains the Author of grace; the Sun of the spiritual life. The Sacrament that contains the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

II. The real presence the doctrine and belief of the Church in all ages. This belief and this doctrine grounded in the word of God. (a) In the Old Testament, the shadow of the New, which is the substance. Types or figures of the Eucharist the bread and wine offered by Melchisedech, the unleavened bread taken with the paschal lamb, the manna, etc. These types not fulfilled if the Eucharist be itself but a figure. (b) In the New Testament, the divine promise (John vi.); its fulfillment (Matt. xxvi.); the mind and practice of the Apostolic Church (I. Cor. x.). Either Christ is not God, or He has given Himself under the form of bread to feed the souls of men.

III. The doctrine of transubstantiation the necessary sequel of that of the real presence. As surely as Christ is the God of truth, so surely are the words of consecration literally true.

IV. Two other mysteries bound up with the real presence and transubstantiation: the permanence of the accidents of bread and wine, the presence of Our Lord's body in heaven and on earth at the same time. In the things of faith we often go against that which appears to the senses. Our Lord's presence in the Eucharist altogether different from His presence in heaven.

V. Form and matter of the Sacrament; minister and subject; persons who may not receive, persons who are bound to receive.

VI. Symbolism of the Eucharist. Bread, the staff of life, nourishes, gives growth, makes strong, sates the hungry; corresponding fourfold effect of the Eucharistic bread in the spiritual order.

All of the seven Sacraments instituted by our blessed Lord are holy in themselves and means of holiness to those who receive them worthily. But there is one of them that, by common consent of believers, is never spoken of save as the Holy or the Most Holy Sacrament. The other Sacraments contain grace and are channels of grace; this contains the Author of grace, and is the unfailing fountain of all grace. As the sun is the center of the system of lesser

bodies that circle round it, and the source of light and warmth to all things that live on the earth, so is the HolyEucharist the center of the other Sacraments, and the source of spiritual light and warmth to the souls of men.

The Holy Eucharist, as the catechism teaches us, is the Sacrament that contains the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a sacrifice also, but with that aspect of it I will not deal now. For the present I will consider it only as a Sacrament, that is to say, a sensible sign of grace instituted by Christ Our Lord for the sanctification of souls. We discern in it the three things needful to constitute a Sacrament. The bread and wine together with the words of consecration are the sensible sign; the words of Our Lord at the Last Supper are the guarantee of divine institution; and as for the conferring of grace, the Eucharist, as has already been observed, contains the very Author of grace.

Two things we hold as of faith concerning the Holy Eucharist; first, that our blessed Lord is really present in this Sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine; second, that He is present, not by coming down from heaven after the manner of His going up from Mount Olivet, but by the change of bread into His body and wine into His blood. The former is the doctrine of the Real Presence, the latter that of transubstantiation.

It is and ever has been the faith of Catholics that our blessed Lord is as truly and as really present in the Holy Eucharist as He was in the stable at Bethlehem or in the cottage at Nazareth. And if any one asks us on what ground we believe this we make answer that our faith is founded upon the teaching of that Church which the Word of God declares to be the pillar and ground of the truth. The one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church so teaches, so has ever

taught, and we take her word for it, in this as in other things, without an instant of hesitation or shadow of misgiving. Yet the Church herself, speaking by the mouth of the apostle, would have us be always ready to give every one that asks a reason for the hope that is in us. And she refers us, for proofs of this particular doctrine, to the books of the Old Testament and the New, which she has carefully guarded throughout all the ages, and which she guarantees to be inspired of God Himself.

The Old Testament, as St. Paul makes plain to us, was a shadow of the New, which is the substance. In that old covenant of God with His chosen people there is ever a looking forward to the new and perfect one. It is no poetic fancy, in this instance, but an overruling divine purpose which makes "coming events cast their shadows before." The things of the law were but types of "the good things to come." And there were many types of the best and greatest of these good things, that is, of the Holy Eucharist. There was (1) that most striking figure of the Eucharist, the sacrifice offered by Melchisedech in bread and wine; (2) the bread of the proposition which, as we read in the First Book of Kings, only the pure and holy could receive and only priests could dispense; (3) the bread baked in the ashes and given by an angel to the prophet Elias who went in the strength of that bread forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God (III. Kings, xix. 5-9); (4) the unleavened bread taken by the Israelites with the paschal lamb; (5) the blood of the testament with which Moses sprinkled the people (Exod. xxiv. and Heb. ix.); (6) last, but not least, the manna with which the children of Israel were fed in the wilderness for forty years until they entered the land of promise (Exod. xvi. compared with John vi.).

Now the point that I would make is that none of these types or

figures has been fulfilled if we take the Blessed Eucharist to be itself but a figure of the body and blood of Christ. A figure, from the nature of the case, foretokens, not another figure, but a reality. Hence, as Melchisedech offered sacrifice in bread and wine, and as Our Lord is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedech, He must have offered, under the form of bread and wine, which are the figure and shadow, the very substance of His body and blood; else would the thing prefigured be no better than that which prefigured it. So, since Moses, having, as God's ambassador, given commandments to the people, delivered to them the covenant or testament sprinkled with blood, saying, This is the blood of the testament, Our Lord, of whom Moses was a figure, having given a new commandment to His disciples and a new testament, also gave in very truth His blood to seal it at the Last Supper; else the thing shadowed forth in the Old Law was not fulfilled. So, once more, since the manna was bread from heaven, the Eucharist must be a bread from heaven, too, and a more excellent bread by how much the thing signified is more excellent than that which shadows it forth; nay, none other than the living bread who came down from heaven, and who Himself assures us, "The bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world" (John vi. 51).

We come now to the New Testament and the proofs of the real presence that are to be found therein. We have, in the first place, the express promise of Christ that He would give His flesh as bread for the life of the world (John vi.). Then we have the fulfillment of this promise, at the Last Supper, as recorded by the three Evangelists and by St. Paul (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.; Luke xxii.; I. Cor. ix.). The divine words are plain, their meaning unmistakable: This is My body; this is My blood. Lastly, we have the mind of the Apostolic Church as expressed by St. Paul, where he declares that the chalice

is the communion of the blood of Christ, the bread the partaking of the body of Christ (I. Cor. x. 16), and this in so real a sense that whoever eats or drinks unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eats and drinks to his own undoing, bringing the judgment of God down upon himself (I. Cor. x. 11). The apostle reckons it a sacrilege to receive unworthily, insists upon the need of one's proving oneself before receiving, that is, of seeing to it that one be not unworthy, and says of those who behave as if the Eucharist were ordinary bread that they fail to "discern the body of the Lord," which must needs be really present to be really discerned.

From these texts it follows that either the real presence is a divine fact divinely revealed, or Jesus Christ is not God. Words could not convey a plainer meaning than those used by Our Lord. The Jews took Him at His word, and many of them, not believing Him to be God, said, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* and because they found His saying hard, went their way, and walked no longer with Him. His apostles, believing Him to be God, having the words of eternal life, took Him at His word, and saw in the Eucharist, not common bread and wine, but the body and blood of the Redeemer. The whole Christian world for the first fifteen hundred years, and the great bulk of Christians since then, have taken Him at His word, and despite the hardness of the saying, have firmly believed His body to be present in the Eucharist under the form of bread and His blood under the form of wine. Now, if Christ is God, since Christ is God, He must have foreseen that those who were to believe in Him would take His words in their obvious and natural meaning; would bend the knee before the tabernacle and adore the Host. Suppose for the sake of argument that they have been deceived in so taking Him, it is plain that He could

have forestalled such deception by one word from His mouth. That word was never spoken. Therefore, as surely as Jesus Christ is God, veracious and omniscient, so surely is He really present on our altars in the Most Holy Sacrament. The Real Presence is the divinely enacted sequel of the incarnation. Either the Word has not at all been made flesh, and the Christian religion is false at its very core, or the Word-made-flesh takes the form of bread to feed the souls of men.

The doctrine of the Real Presence has, in like manner, its necessary sequel in the doctrine of transubstantiation. The former defines the divine fact, the latter defines the divine mode in which that fact is brought about. If Jesus Christ is really present in the Eucharist, since Jesus Christ is really present in the Eucharist, what was bread becomes, by virtue of the divine words of consecration, His body, and what was wine becomes His blood. The literal truth of the Real Presence hangs wholly on the literal truth of the words of consecration. Either Our Lord is really present by virtue of these words, or He is not really present at all. But if the words "This is My body," are literally true, that which "this" stands for is no longer bread. The word "this" stands for one thing, not for two things. Now, that a thing should be bread and not bread at one and the same time, bread and the body of Christ, involves a manifest contradiction, and Jesus Christ is not the God of contradictions, but the God of truth. And as surely as He is the God of truth, so surely are the words of consecration literally true; so surely, by virtue of them, is bread changed into His body and wine into His blood. Jesus Christ is the Word-made-flesh, the word of God, the word of omnipotence, the creative word, who makes the things that are not to be, and changes the inner nature of the things that are. Keener than any two-edged sword, the divine

word reaches even unto the division of substance and accident in the elements, upholds the latter in its being, transmutes the former into the living bread that nourishes unto life everlasting and the living wine that still runs red for the redemption of men.

Bound up with the Real Presence and transubstantiation are two other mysteries, (1) the permanence of the accidents of bread and wine after the change of substance, (2) the presence of Our Lord's body in heaven and on so many altars at one and the same time. The former mystery lies in this, that the accidents, that is to say, the taste, color, shape, and all that appears to the senses, remain without a subject. We have nothing like this anywhere; no parallel to it; nothing that can help us to understand it. It is here that the miracle of the Eucharist differs from the miracle wrought at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. At Cana what at first was water became wine, not only in substance but in accidents as well. To the sight and smell and taste of the guests at the wedding feast the water became wine. But on our altars, after the wondrous change has been wrought, that which was wine, though in reality wine no longer, seems such to the senses. And the senses do not deceive us; that which was bread has still all the appearances of bread, and that which was wine all the appearances of wine. Our senses are conversant with only the outward qualities of things; they can tell us nothing of the inner nature. The outward qualities, or accidents, really remain, and our senses are true when they attest that such is the case. Relying on this testimony of the senses, the intellect, in the order of nature, would declare the substance of the bread and wine to be there, too. But the intellect that has received into itself the light of divine faith, discerns, as the apostle has it, the body of the Lord.

In the things of faith, the things of the unseen world, we often go

straight against that which appears to the senses. Take the case of the incarnation itself. God the Son, the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, was born of the Virgin Mary. Yet outwardly He in no wise differed from other men. If you went by what the senses told you of Him you would set Him down as a mere man. To the Jews, who went by what sensibly appeared, He was a man merely. And when He declared He was God, they would have stoned Him to death as a blasphemer. On the other hand, when Simon Peter confessed Him to be Christ, the Son of the living God, he went by faith, not by sense. And Our Lord declared him to be blessed, because he had received from the Father in heaven the faculty of seeing things other than they seem to the senses. Now, just as Peter saw one thing and believed another; saw One before him who was found in fashion as a man, but believed Him to be God; so we, who have the same gift of faith, see, in this divine mystery, and taste what seems to be bread, but what we believe to be and is truly the body of Christ.

The other mystery is the presence of our blessed Lord in heaven and on our altars at one and the same time. This mystery we simply believe, as we do so many other mysteries, without trying to account for or explain it. One thing, however, we must bear in mind. Our Lord's presence in the Eucharist, though no whit the less real, is altogether different from His presence in heaven. He is in heaven as He was while He yet dwelt among men in this mortal life, only that His body is glorified. But in the Eucharist it is present after a spiritual manner, after the manner that the soul is in the body, whole and entire in each part of it, or as God is in the universe, wholly present in every part of it. A glorified body has spiritual properties, and we know that Our Lord, after His Resurrection, entered the room where the disciples were gathered, while the doors were shut. The

body of Our Lord is present in the Eucharist, not as a body, not as an extended thing, but as a substance, for the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of Our Lord's body; and as the substance of the bread is in every particle of the bread, the body of Our Lord is in every particle of the host, no matter how small. It is present in the whole host when undivided, and in every part of the host when divided; in something of the same way that a man's face is in a mirror, and is still in every part of the mirror when this is broken in pieces. But comparisons and illustrations are of little help. They fall far too short of the great mystery of the Sacramental presence of the Saviour on our altars, and we can but adore it in humble faith.

By virtue of the words of consecration the body of Our Lord is present under the form of bread and the blood under the form of wine. But since the body has life in it, for having once risen from the dead Our Lord now dieth no more, where the body is there in like manner is the soul and the divinity. For this reason the Church is enabled to administer the Sacrament of the Eucharist under one kind. He who receives the Sacrament under the form of bread alone receives a perfect Sacrament, since Christ whole and entire is present under the form of bread. It is to a perfect sacrifice, not to a perfect Sacrament, that the two elements in the Eucharist are essential.

The form of this Sacrament are the words of Our Lord. The matter is wheaten bread and wine from the grape. The minister is a validly ordained priest. The subject is a validly baptized person. But not every one who is capable of receiving the Eucharist can lawfully receive it. The person who is in mortal sin can receive it neither lawfully nor fruitfully; and it is not to be given to children, according to the present discipline of the Church, till they reach the years of discretion. Nor is it to be given to insane persons, or people

bereft of their senses. But a child in danger of death, who knows enough to distinguish the Eucharist from other food, should receive it as viaticum; and any insane person who once had the use of reason and led a Christian life, may receive the viaticum at the hour of death, so there be no danger of irreverence.

The Church enjoins upon the faithful to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, as well as toward the end of life by way of viaticum. This twofold obligation imposed by the Church is founded upon the divine precept expressed in the words of Our Lord, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you." We are not to understand that the Church deems it quite enough to receive Holy Communion once a year. The words of the Lateran Council are, "at least once a year." The Church says to her children, "I bid you perform your Easter duty on pain of being liable to be cut off from me as lifeless and withered members, on pain of spiritual death, of spiritual starvation." Now if a man is to live the life of grace and grow spiritually it is, of course, not enough just to stave off starvation. The Church would wish to see her children often, even daily, at the altar where the bread of life is dispensed. At the same time she does not lay this upon their consciences, being a wise mother, wise with the wisdom that is from above. She knows that growth is not a thing that can be got by forcing, and that this is as true in the spiritual as it is in the physical world. She realizes indeed that one who is stubbornly bent on keeping from food altogether must be made to take food lest he starve. But she recognizes that such action is not to be resorted to save in this extreme case, and that it is only one who eats with a will and has a relish for his food that can get any real benefit from it. She wishes us to create a relish for the food of our souls by the exercise of the virtues that become a Christian, by honesty,

truthfulness, sobriety, chastity; to foster a spiritual taste by habits of self-denial; that we may hunger after this divine food, and so be found in the number of those whom Our Lord declares blessed, because, having a hunger after righteousness, they shall be filled.

A word in conclusion on the symbolism of this Sacrament. Most aptly does bread symbolize the effects of it. Hence Our Lord, in the sixth chapter of St. John, speaks of it in terms of this symbol only. Bread is the staff of life. It nourishes, fosters growth, imparts strength, sates the hungry. A fourfold corresponding effect in the spiritual order is produced by the Eucharist, which is the bread of life.

And first, the Eucharist nourishes the life of the soul. "He who eats Me," says Our Lord, "the same shall live by Me." And again: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you." Nothing could be clearer. But it is only the living who eat bread and are nourished by it. Therefore the man who is dead in mortal sin is not fit to eat the bread of life. Instead of getting life from it, he does but find fresh cause of death, and cripple his chance of ever coming to life again.

The Eucharist fosters the growth of the spiritual life. In the natural order, man's growth is confined to the period between birth and adult age. Again, in the natural order, man attains a certain stature, which he may not overpass. Spiritual growth, on the other hand, is not limited to a fixed period of time, but extends over the whole of this mortal life. Neither is it confined within fixed bounds, for there are no bounds to the possible, and we are bidden to be perfect even as Our Father in heaven is perfect. We shall "reach the measure of the years of the fulness of Christ" only by feeding on the food that Christ has given us. Alas! that so many souls should be stunted in growth and starved, while this divine banquet is daily

spread out before them. For too many Christians the spring time of spiritual growth comes only when the hair is gray and the body bent with years.

The Eucharist gives strength to the soul. We are laborers in Christ's vineyard; and we are soldiers of Christ. But who can work without bread? Or what soldier can stand day after day in the fighting line if he be without his rations? The man that is famished, starved, is fit for nothing. We can not do Christ's work in the world, or fight His battles, unless we get strength from the bread of the strong. The prophet went a day's journey into the wilderness, and was faint, and lay and slept under a juniper tree. But when he arose, and ate of the bread that was baked in the ashes, he went in the strength of it forty days and as many nights to Horeb the mount of God. So we faint ones are fed by Christ in the wilderness of this world. Even as He multiplied the five loaves in the desert, and with them fed the five thousand, so he multiplies without limit the bread of life, and with it feeds the multitudes who else must perish of hunger, far from home.

Lastly, the Eucharist sates the hunger of the soul. Who has not at some time or other felt the pangs of bodily hunger? And even if such a one there be, yet is there no one but has known the hunger after happiness, the hunger of the heart. Men seek to satisfy this hunger with what are called the good things of this world. They are even fain to feed on the husks of swine, like the prodigal of old. But if they would keep from starving, they needs must return to the Father's house to receive the bread of life. God alone can satisfy the hunger of the heart. But the heart that God feeds must fast from earthly food, even as one must fast from bodily food to feed on the bread of life. "If the heart were all expended here," says one who was fed of God, "nothing of it would be left for heaven, and I

wish to take that which loves with me into the other world." Let us not waste on creatures what was made for the Creator. Let us learn to fast from earthly food that we may hunger for the divine banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion renewed, in which the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge is given us of future glory.

VII.—The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle."—Heb. xiii. 10.

SYNOPSIS.—I. Altar, priest and sacrifice go together. Sacrifice the highest form of worship; offered to God alone; where sacrifice is abolished prayer deemed highest form of worship.

II. The Eucharist a Sacrament and a sacrifice. Difference between these two. Sacrifice defined. Four things found in it, victim, priest, immolation, end for which offered.

III. Sacrifice found in every form of religion from the beginning of the world. Offered in the outskirts of the earthly paradise, by Jewish patriarch and priest; by the tribe of Levi from generation to generation.

IV. The sacrifices of the Old Law in themselves of little worth. Shadows of the one perfect sacrifice to be offered in every place, from the rising of the sun to its going down. The victim sinless "made sin" for us. His sacrifice satisfies every requirement of strictest justice.

V. The one perfect sacrifice once offered one thousand nine hundred years ago on the altar of the cross. None other offered since; that is to say, none other than the one then offered. Identity of the Mass with the sacrifice of the cross. The latter no mere event that is done and over, but, being the work of the Eternal, a standing fact for all time.

VI. Proofs of the Eucharistic sacrifice from St. Paul, from the words of its divine institution, from its type in the Old Testament, from the prophet Malachy. The Jewish Pasch and the Christian Pasch type and antitype.

VII. Conclusion.—Obligation of assisting at this divine sacrifice on Sundays and holy days of obligation. No good work can supply the place of the Mass. How great store we should set on the treasure of this holy sacrifice.

Altar, priest, sacrifice, these three go together. There is no altar but for the offering of sacrifice, no lawful sacrifice without a priest called of God as Aaron was. Hence, where sacrifice is abolished,

the priesthood is done away with, altars are pulled down, and prayer becomes the highest form of religious worship. And because the highest form of worship can be offered to God alone, where sacrifice is no longer offered, no voice is raised in prayer to the saints that reign with Christ. The human mind is logical even when entangled in the mazes of error; for error follows from the logical working out of false principles, as truth does from the logical working out of true ones. Is prayer, then, the highest form of Christian worship? Is the Christian religion without a sacrifice? Let the words of the text supply the answer: "We have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle." Christians have an altar, as the Jews had theirs; therefore Christians have a sacrifice, as the Jews had theirs. This sacrifice is the Holy Mass.

The blessed Eucharist is at once a Sacrament and a sacrifice—the one great sacrifice of the New Law. As a Sacrament, it is in one sense an abiding thing, a presence on our altars that is with us always; as a sacrifice, it is an action, transient in its nature, begun and ended all in half an hour. As a Sacrament, it is given to men; as a sacrifice, it is offered to God. As a Sacrament, it is the manna of the soul, the staff of the spiritual life; as a sacrifice it presents again the price of our redemption, the blood of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

By sacrifice, in its widest sense, is meant any good work done to honor God and unite us with Him in holy fellowship. In this sense prayer is a sacrifice, and so is sorrow for sin, of which the Psalmist says, "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit." But in the strict and proper sense, sacrifice means the offering to God and immolation of some sensible thing in token of His sovereign dominion over all creatures, and of our subjection to Him. That which is offered

must be something sensible, for sacrifice is an outward sign or token of the worship that is in the heart, and every such sign of inner thought or feeling is, from the nature of the case, perceptible by the senses. God, from the cradle of the race, bade men offer things that are sensible, as when Cain offered the first fruits of the earth and Abel the firstlings of the flock. But that which is offered must be immolated, else it will be only a gift, and no true sacrifice. "For every high priest," says St. Paul, "is ordained to offer" not only "gifts" but "sacrifices" as well (Heb. viii. 3). Immolation is the real sacrificial action, the distinctive note of sacrifice. Hence, in the olden time, the thing offered in sacrifice had always to be destroyed, if a solid substance, by breaking it up or burning it, if a liquid, by pouring it out on the ground, if an animal, by shedding its blood. And to God alone can a victim be immolated. "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me." The great end of sacrifice is the worship of God, but it is offered also to satisfy the justice of God for our sins, to obtain favors from Him, and to return Him thanks. Corresponding to these four ends, there were in the Old Law four kinds of sacrifice, holocausts, or whole burnt offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, and thanks offerings. A sacrifice is an act of divine worship, and as we must worship God, not after our own caprice, but in the way He has appointed, no one can take upon him to offer sacrifice unless he be called of God as was Aaron. Under the law of nature, from Adam to Moses, the priests were the first born, and also the heads of families; under the Mosaic Law, the sons and descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; under the New Law, the one high priest is Christ, and men are His ministers, sharing His priesthood forever after the order of Melchisedech.

In all lands, among all peoples, in all forms of religion, Jewish or

Pagan, from the beginning of the world down to the coming of Christ, there was sacrifice. The pagan Plutarch testifies that if you were to go round the world you might find cities without walls, or literature, or wealth; but a city in which sacrifice is not offered to obtain blessings and avert evil no one, he says, ever saw. The impulse to offer sacrifice seems to be implanted in the nature of man, at least since the fall. He feels his own weakness, he is conscious of his own sinfulness, and a natural instinct prompts him to seek help and make atonement for sin by immolating a victim to some higher power. The pagans, who knew not the one true God, offered sacrifice to idols; the Jews, of old God's chosen people, offered sacrifice to Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth, almighty and eternal.

From the very cradle of the race, as I have said, there was sacrifice. It was offered in the outskirts, as it were, of the earthly paradise, while the pair whose sin and fall made sacrifice a necessity were yet in the flesh. When Noah stepped out of the ark, after the waters of the flood had receded, his first act was to erect an altar and offer a victim to the Most High. So did the patriarchs, by God's own order; so did Moses in the land of Egypt, when the paschal lamb was slain and its blood sprinkled for the deliverance of his people; so did Aaron, the high priest of God, and the men of the tribe of Levi, from generation unto generation, God Himself having set them apart and ordained them for this special purpose.

But the sacrifices of the Old Law, in themselves, were of little worth. Not by the blood of goats and oxen could the sins of the world be blotted out. The sacrifices of the olden time were but symbols; they did but shadow forth the one great and perfect sacrifice of the New Law. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me. Holocausts for sin did not please thee. Then said I, Lo! I come; in the head of the book it is written of me

that I should do thy will, O God." The words are spoken in the person of our high priest, the Son of God, who came into the world, and was born of a virgin, and thus became also the Son of Man, true God and true man in one person. "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not." God had no pleasure in the sacrifices offered by sinful men, save in so far as they adumbrated the sacrifice of the Sinless One. But He that was sinless was "made sin" for us. By a miracle of His wisdom and power He took upon Himself, without sin, our sinful nature, and by a further miracle of His goodness and mercy "blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, . . . fastening it to the cross." And the atonement He made for sin, the redemption He wrought with His blood, while, on the one hand, a gratuitous act of pure clemency, satisfied, on the other hand, every requirement of the strictest justice. How, it has been asked, is it just that the innocent should suffer for the guilty? The innocent, the Sinless One, suffered, not as sinless, but as having been "made sin" for us. "A body thou hast fitted to me." When the Son of God took upon Himself our nature, when He "was made of a woman," and born of a woman, He became, not man merely, but the Son of Man, yea, of the man who had sinned. "Let us make MAN in our own image and likeness," it was said from the beginning. In creating Adam, God made, not a man, but Man, that is, the whole human race. The Son of God, therefore, in becoming the Son of Man, became a member of the human family, and, on the principle of race solidarity, became answerable for the sins of His fellow men. Had He become man otherwise than by being "made of a woman" and born of a woman, He would not have been of the race of Adam, the fallen race, for the race is propagated by birth. In that case, He would not have been "made sin" for us, nor would the shedding of His blood have been an atonement for sin, since justice requires that

satisfaction be made, if not by the person, at least in the nature, that has sinned. "The prince of this world cometh," said Our Lord, "and in me he hath not anything." Neither had he, for Our Lord was personally sinless. But He was racially guilty, for God the Father saw in Him the representative of the family of man, made in the image and likeness of a race of sinners, and therefore delivered over to die, between two of these sinners, upon a cross. "And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucify him between two others, one on each side and Jesus in the midst." The two others were sinners, "malefactors" St. Luke calls them, but what was their guilt in God's eyes compared with that of the One who, though sinless, had yet been "made sin" for us!

Thus was offered, on the hill of Calvary, for the first time in the history of the world, a victim worthy of the Most High God, even His only-begotten Son. But that was well-nigh nineteen hundred years ago, and has there been no sacrifice since then? Certainly none other than the one then offered on the altar of the Cross. That was a finished sacrifice, yet in the sense that every work of the eternal is finished—finished, but abiding still. It is written that *God rested on the seventh day from all the works that He made.* Yet Our Lord could say, "The Father worketh still, and I work." The work of creation, and of the institution of things, was finished on the seventh day, but the work of conservation, of the maintenance of things in their primeval constitution, still goes on. Nor is conservation a new work, but the original creative work prolonged forever. God spoke and things came into being, not to pass away, but to endure, and to endure by virtue of the word spoken from the beginning. And the same word, now "made flesh," spoke at the Last Supper, instituting the sacrifice of the New Law in His own body

and blood, spoke on the Cross, consummating the sacrifice of His own body and blood, and the self-same sacrifice still endures by virtue of the selfsame word. "Such a sacrifice," says Cardinal Newman, "was not to be forgotten. It was not to be—it could not be—a mere event in the world's history, which was to be done and over, and was to pass away except in its obscure, unrecognized effects. If that great deed was what we believe it to be, what we know it is, it must remain present though past; it must be a standing fact for all times." Such is this work of the eternal, like Himself, ever ancient and ever new, past yet always present, done and over yet always being done anew, over and over again. "As often as this commemorative sacrifice is celebrated, the work of our redemption is carried on," and will be carried on till that work is done—till the last man has been redeemed. For "the death of the Lord" is to be "shown forth, until He come."

"The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the participation of the body of Christ?" These words of St. Paul are but an echo of the words of Christ: "This is my body; this is my blood of the New Testament. Do this for a commemoration of me." What *this?* This that He did, giving His own body and blood under the forms of bread and wine. Here was a rite and ceremonial, like the rite and ceremonial of the Jewish Pasch, the ceremonial being a breaking and blessing of bread, a blessing and pouring out of wine, the rite a consecration of these elements into the body that was broken and the blood that was shed on the Cross. The bloody sacrifice was offered once, and once for all, without rite or ceremonial. It was offered by the high priest alone, while the men whom He made sharers of His priesthood were scattered as sheep before the wolf. But never was sacrifice offered by a congre-

gation, or body of worshippers, without fitting rite and ceremonial. Therefore did Christ, with fitting rite and ceremonial, institute, for Christian worshippers, the unbloody sacrifice, which is unbloody, not that it is without real blood, but that the blood is not really shed. And because the blood that is offered is the selfsame blood that was once really shed, the unbloody sacrifice, with its rite and ceremonial, is the selfsame as the bloody sacrifice. Christ, our high priest, trod the winepress alone. But the price, His blood of the New Testament, is a sacrifice to God, a Sacrament and gift to men; as a sacrifice, pleading the merits of His Passion, speaking better than the blood of Abel; as a Sacrament, "cleansing the conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

We read in Genesis that Melchisedech, king of Salem, and priest of the Most High, offered sacrifice in bread and wine. To this Melchisedech, Abraham, though priest himself and patriarch of God's chosen people, offered tithes of all he possessed, thus doing him homage as his superior in priestly rank. Now Melchisedech was a figure of Christ, who is "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Therefore Christ has offered sacrifice after the manner of Melchisedech. And because He is "a priest forever," He still does so, in the holy Mass where He is both High Priest and Victim. This precisely is what was foretold by the prophet Malachy—a time when the bloody sacrifices of the Jews should cease, and in every place, from the rising of the sun to its going down, there should be offered to the Most High a clean oblation, and this, too, among the Gentiles, "for great is my name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." We have, then, an altar whereof they can not partake who serve the tabernacle, and whereof they will not partake who, having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, the things that make for their peace.

"For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed." The Christian Pasch followed the Jewish Pasch, and fulfills it. The relation of antitype and type between the two is as striking as it is significant. In the former a lamb was slain and offered; in the latter is slain and offered the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. The former wrought redemption of the first born from temporal death, and deliverance of God's people from bondage to tyrant; the latter works redemption of the new born from eternal death, and deliverance of God's people, both Jew and Gentile, from a far worse bondage, in so much as Satan is a far more heartless tyrant and harder taskmaster than was Pharaoh. The Jew ate the flesh of the lamb with unleavened bread; the Christian eats the flesh of the Lamb under the form of unleavened bread. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." "And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The first Jewish Passover wrought deliverance from bondage; the second passover served but to commemorate the first, and to shadow forth that which was to come. So the first Christian Passover, at the Last Supper and on Calvary, wrought our deliverance; the second, on the altars of our churches, serves to commemorate the first and to apply its merits—for in the New Law is no shadow, but the reality. And just as every subsequent Passover of the Jews, though commemorative and typical, was a true sacrifice, so is every subsequent Christian Passover, though commemorative and symbolic, a true sacrifice, yea, the one true sacrifice of the New Law. But while in each subsequent Jewish Passover a different lamb was slain, and the sacrifice therefore was numerically different from the preceding, in each subsequent Christian Passover the same Lamb is offered and partaken of which was slain once for all on Calvary. The sacrifice is therefore numerically the same as that which was offered at the Last Supper and on the Cross. No explana-

tion need be given, no explanation can be given, why the Mass is a sacrifice, other than this full and ample one, that it is not a new sacrifice at all, but in all that appertains to the constitution of sacrifice, in its inner essence, in every essential respect, the same sacrifice as that of the Cross; that it is in reality the sacrifice of the Cross, in a mystery and by a miracle of Christ's power, prolonged forever. Every altar is a Calvary, where the same Victim is ever offered by the same High Priest, under the veil of the things that appear to sense.

The Church commands us, on pain of mortal sin, to assist at the holy sacrifice of the mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Sunday is the Lord's day. The other six days of the week He has made over to us; the first He reserves as His own. And the way He would have us sanctify it, the duty He lays upon us, is to hear Mass. We are earnestly exhorted to sanctify the Sunday in other ways, to give more time to prayer and meditation, to read good books, to attend the vesper service, to assist at benediction, to visit the sick, to comfort the sorrowful; all these things we are exhorted to do, but we are commanded to hear Mass, and this, as I have said, on pain of mortal sin. The other works are good, are excellent, each in its way, but none of them can supply the place of this one, or make up for default in this. Of course there is such a thing as being excused from hearing Mass on Sunday. We are not called upon to put forth an heroic effort to satisfy this obligation; but we are called upon to make an honest effort; we are called upon to make some exertion and put ourselves to some inconvenience. As for those who live under the shadow of the church, or even within sound of the church bell, there can hardly be any excuse for missing Mass on Sunday save sickness or the like.

And oh, if we did but realize, as did the Christians of the olden

time, as the saints of God have done in every age, what a treasure we have in the holy Mass, we surely should set greater store by it, and put forth greater effort to assist at it more frequently and more devoutly. If we had faith even as a grain of mustard seed, we should surmount every obstacle and even move a seeming mountain of difficulty in order to be present at this august sacrifice. For faith assures us that here the mystery of our redemption is indeed renewed; the same body that was pierced for us on Calvary is mystically broken for us on the altar; the same blood that flowed from the wounds in those blessed hands and feet, and trickled from the spear wound in the heart, is once more poured out for us, and cries to heaven with a better pleading than that of Abel. It is good to pray at home, it is good to give alms, it is good to visit the sick, it is good to comfort the sorrowful; but it is better than any of these, better than all of these together, to assist humbly and devoutly at the holy Mass. Through this adorable sacrifice, as the Fathers of Trent tell us, God being appeased, grants grace and the gift of repentance, and pardons sins and crimes even the most enormous. Oh, if we did but know this great gift of God, as the angels know it who come down from heaven in troops whenever it is offered, we should think nothing of coming miles and miles to be present at holy Mass. We should even be found daily assisting at it, like the sainted Monica, who "never for a day absented herself from the altar whence she knew that Victim to be dispensed, by which the handwriting that was against us is blotted out."*

*Confessions of St. Augustine, bk. IX. c. 13.

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